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# JUDAISM

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## THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT: PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

by

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**Halakhah and Homosexuality: A Reappraisal**  
*Robert Kirschner*

**The Unity of the Jewish People —  
A Theological View**  
*Seymour Siegel*

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# JUDAISM

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

In increasing measure, modern men are turning again to the quest for a worldview on the issues that are timeless—the meaning of life, the challenge of death, the purpose of suffering, the significance of the individual, his relation to society, and the goal of history. In order to advance this enterprise of spiritual discovery of our time this Journal has been projected. It will be primarily concerned with the philosophy, ethics, and religion of Judaism as a factor in the contemporary world . . .

We are committed to the proposition that Judaism has positive value today for Jews and for the world . . . At the same time, we disassociate ourselves from the dangerous tendency toward the hardening of party lines on the contemporary Jewish scene . . . The members of the Board of Editors belong to every school of Jewish life or to none. The trends popularly referred to as Orthodox, Conservatism, Reform, Reconstructionism, as well as others that as yet have no specific names, have their advocates among us, though no institution or movement is officially represented . . . Undoubtedly, our differences will find expression in these pages, but we shall be at one in opposing the dogmatism which takes for granted that one's own particular standpoint has a monopoly on truth and the authoritarianism which would suppress any contrary point of view.

*Judaism* will be dedicated to the quest for truth in the spirit of freedom. Our columns will be open to anyone who has something significant to say and the ability to say it well. New and unconventional interpretations, whatever their standpoint, will be welcomed from every source, for we share the conviction of the Talmud that "Both these and the others are the words of the living God." *From the introductory article by Robert Gordis, "Toward a Re-nascence of Judaism" in Vol. I, No. 1.*

## *The First Reader*

### *Israel and the Arabs*

Whether we call the Arab disturbances which have been going on in Israel for nine months “riots” or “an uprising,” it is clear that some solution to the conflict must be found with as little delay as possible. This much is certain, but beyond this point the divergence of attitudes is limitless.

Shortly after the beginning of the confrontation, we projected a wide-ranging symposium in JUDAISM on the theme, “The Arab-Israeli Conflict — Are These the Solutions?”

The contributors whose views appear in this issue present a conspectus of all of the major approaches to the problem. It is to be hoped that a consensus will emerge from the principal positions being advocated that can set Israel and the Arabs on the road to enduring peace.

### *Adam and Eve*

It is widely believed, in both Jewish and Christian circles, that the Adam and Eve narrative in Genesis offers a biblical basis for the subordination of women. The Summer 1986 issue of JUDAISM carried a paper by Michael L. Rosenzweig, who maintains that the phrase, *ezer kenegdo*, traditionally rendered “a helpmate for him” or “a fitting helper,” really means, “a helper equal to him” and, thus, offers no basis for the common view of male supremacy.

The subject is further discussed and illumined by *Berel Dov Lerner* in his paper, “And He Shall Rule Over Thee,” dealing with the human pair after they have been guilty of disobedience in the Garden. Far from justifying male power, he argues, the passage must be seen in the larger context — it is a penalty for a sin, and not a biblical prescription for the relationship of man and woman.

*The Halakhah Should Re-view Homosexuality*

The Fall 1983 issue of JUDAISM was devoted in its entirety to a symposium on homosexuality. To the best of my knowledge, this represented the first full-scale comprehensive treatment of the subject in any Jewish periodical. The general practice in the Jewish community had been to ignore it, except for a few scattered articles in technical journals of one form or another. That issue evoked considerable interest — and a measure of controversy — because it treated all aspects of the subject from varying perspectives and, as with several other JUDAISM symposia, it has become a collectors' item.

In his essay, "Halakhah and Homosexuality: a Reappraisal," *Robert Kirschner* presents a very thoughtful analysis of the traditional halakhah on the subject and pleads for a modification of attitude, based upon scientific progress in this area during the past decades. He recognizes that much is still unknown about homosexuality, but argues that enough has come to light to warrant a reappraisal of traditional Jewish law on the subject.

It is, of course, self-evident — or should be — that even if a transvaluation of homosexuality were to take place in the traditional Halakhah, and society were to adopt a more compassionate attitude toward homosexuals, there would still be a large number of practical problems involved in implementing a more sympathetic and humane outlook. These problems, of course, lie outside the scope of the present paper.

*Ma'oz Zur*

One of the best known and most beloved hymns in the Jewish liturgy is the Hanukkah hymn of thanksgiving, *Ma'oz Zur*. In its original form, the song consisted of five stanzas, written in the form of an acrostic, the first letter of each spelling out the name of the author, "Mordecai." Nothing more is known of the poet, but all signs point to the medieval origin of the hymn, which traces the succession of enemies who threatened the life of the Jewish people but, through the grace of God, failed.

In his paper, "A Meditation on *Ma'oz Zur*," *Ismar Schorsch* begins with a moving reminiscence of the singing of the song by his family as they were escaping from the Nazi claws. He then calls attention to a sixth stanza, written by an unknown poet and appended to the original. It is a passionate cry for vengeance against the "evil power," the medieval Church, which embittered and endangered Jewish life for centuries. The author of the paper sees in the poem "a hunger for irreversible redemption" by God, rather than by various forms of messianism that stress human activism. This reliance on God's role in redemption will lead to "political restraint" and thus rein in some of the less salutary aspects in contemporary Jewish life.

*The Significance of "North"*

The word "north" is, of course, a familiar geographical term referring to one of the points of the compass. For reasons that can only be guessed at, perhaps for its magnetic power, the "north" became endowed in many cultures with supernatural attributes.

In his paper, "The Symbolic Uses of North," *David E. Fass* traces the use of the term, from its original geographical significance in the Bible, to later Jewish literature, where it has a variety of meanings as a source of both peril and of blessing.

*The Problem of God*

*Jacob Sloan* offers some personal reflections on his relationship to God in his paper, "To Know What They Knew." Centuries ago the great medieval Hebrew poet, Solomon Ibn Gabirol, expressed this ambivalent relationship in two Hebrew words, *mimmekha 'eilekha*, "from Thee, to Thee." Writing in the idiom of our day, Sloan reveals this same pattern in his own personal life.

*The Jewish Encyclopedia as an Example of Cooperation*

Truly, all concerned and perspicacious observers of the American scene are agreed that major perils — and great promise — threaten the future of Judaism in America. There are differences among the various groups in the community, but the peril does not reside in the differences; it might be arguably maintained that these divergences are a sign of vitality. What does threaten American Jewry is the divisive hostility among the various alignments and the all-too-frequent absence of mutual respect and the capacity to hear what our neighbor is saying.

In her paper, "There is No Plural in the Verb *Sh'ma* . . . No Plural to the Noun Israel," *Shuly Rubin Schwartz* points out how different the situation was at the beginning of this century. There were strong partisan currents in the community and, yet, the leaders, for all their differences, were able to work harmoniously on major projects, including the monumental achievement of the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, which, three-quarters of a century later, still remains the finest work of its kind in any language. This harmony was not easily achieved. There were strains and conflict in the process, but, ultimately, these differences contributed to a richer product. The author voices the hope that contemporary Jewish leaders may derive a lesson from this past experience. To this prayer we say, "Amen."

*Unity Will Come From Openness*

If there is any one ideal that unites the discordant hosts of Israel today, it is the goal of Jewish unity. To be sure, those who loudly hymn its praises all too often offer their own position as a platform on which all other Jews can unite. The theme is expounded in psychological, ideological and historical terms from every conceivable perspective.

In his paper, "The Unity of the Jewish People — A Theological View," *Seymour Siegel* presents a religious basis for the conviction that Jews are all members of one people and indicates the factors that are needed to create not mere conformity but a genuine and fruitful unity.

R.G.



# THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT — ARE THESE THE SOLUTIONS?

## *Exploring the Options*

ROBERT GORDIS

AS THE PROBLEM OF ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIAN Arabs careens from crisis to catastrophe, there is no shortage of slogans being proposed as solutions — “The security of Israel must be safeguarded,” “The legitimate goals of the Palestinians must be recognized,” “A solution can be achieved only through negotiation,” “Violence and terror are guaranteed to fail.” The validity of any, or all, of these contentions, even when they appear contradictory, may be defended, but they do not help move the situation off dead-center.

Our readers may, therefore, well ask, “What have we here! Another discussion of the Arab-Israeli conflict?” Since the initial disturbances began, hundreds of thousands of words have been written and spoken on the subject. Judging by the footage of film expended, the conflict may well be the most photogenic in history! Photographers and television cameras have had a field day for weeks on end. The war in Afghanistan, the carnage in Lebanon, the century-old feud among the Irish, the seven year war between Iran and Iraq, the misery of the peoples in Central America — none of these has commanded a tithe of the world’s attention that has been focussed upon the conflict between the Palestinian Arabs and the Israelis.

This preoccupation with a tiny portion of the earth’s surface on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean may be viewed as a tribute — one we could well do without — to the central position that this small land holds in the hearts and minds of Jews, Christians and Moslems the world over.

In the months since this symposium was planned last spring the resentments and hatreds have hardened and the ongoing misunderstanding which produced them has deepened. Our concern is not merely with the painful question of how to cope with the day-to-day disturbances, but, rather, to approach the situation from a long-term perspective and deal with the agonizing conflict of two peoples loving the same land, ready to die for it — but seemingly unable to learn how to live in it.

Virtually all of the contributions to the symposium were written long before the unexpected events of the closing weekend of July, 1988. On Saturday, July 30th, King Hussein of Jordan dissolved the lower house

of the Jordanian parliament, half of whose members are Palestinians. Simultaneously, he severed the bonds between the Bank of Jordan and the chief Palestinian bank. He announced, too, that he would cease paying the salaries of teachers, municipal employees, and Muslim clerics. He also suspended the stipends that he had been paying to local leaders who are known as "The King's Men," a tactic designed to maintain and strengthen his influence on the West Bank. On Sunday, July 31st, in a televised speech, Hussein formally renounced any claims to the territory west of the Jordan River and declared that the P.L.O was "the sole legitimate representative" of the Palestinians. His words were as ambiguous as they were unexpected, and his motives and goals remain inscrutable. Their effect, both short- and long-term, upon the volatile situation in the Middle East are impossible to predict.

Hussein's official withdrawal from any association with the West Bank and Gaza — quixotic, machiavellian, or merely levantine, as you choose — was, of course, totally unexpected. Obviously, it requires a reconsideration of present policies and new tactics for the short term, as the contours of the present situation become clear.

However, the long-term, permanent issues that must be resolved will need to be modified only slightly, if at all. They remain essentially the same — the challenge of a large Arab minority within the borders of the State of Israel, the presence of a hostile Arab population on the West Bank and in Gaza, the preservation of the Jewish character of the State of Israel, the accommodation of this goal to the ideal of a democratic state, and the acceptance or, at least, the acquiescence, of Israel's Arab neighbors in the terms of settlement when they emerge.

These are the fundamental and enduring problems which the contributors in this symposium have sought to address. Hence the cogency and value of their differing, and even contradictory, views will be affected only to a slight degree in the long run by Hussein's maneuver.

Moreover, the presentation of the various positions cheek-by-jowl in the symposium will facilitate the reader's evaluation of the efficacy and justice of each approach to the basic issue. I also believe that this symposium might be an excellent resource for youth and adult discussion groups in synagogues, community centers and on college campuses, and in formal college courses as well.

As a quarterly journal, JUDAISM has obviously not been in a position to react immediately to daily events as they occur. On the other hand, appearing as it does every three months, it is able to bring the perspective of time to bear on the issues.

Even more important, JUDAISM has always maintained the principle of free discussion of all controversial matters. Its pages are open to every viewpoint, if it is expressed in urbane and rational terms. JUDAISM, therefore, has seemed ideally suited to the presentation of a wide-ranging sym-

posium on this heartrending problem that would allow for the frank exchange of views by all the varied groups concerned with it.

We turned, therefore, to a select group of leaders and thinkers — Jewish, Christian and Muslim — in various fields of endeavor, to participate in a symposium on “The Arab-Israeli Conflict — Are These the Solutions?” To help focus the discussion on specific points rather than on generalities, a series of questions was proposed, though the symposiasts were free to use any format that they preferred.

The questions were as follows:

1. In the face of the present disturbances, what steps should be taken now, and by whom?
2. What is required for the security of the State of Israel?
3. What are the legitimate rights of the Palestinian Arabs, within the present-day borders of Israel, in Gaza and on the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) today? In 1993? In 2000?
4. What should be the future status of Jerusalem?
5. What political and diplomatic steps should be taken, and by whom, to help advance the interests of the parties?
6. What, if any, should be the role of the American government? of the United Nations? of the Soviet Union?
7. What role should the Jewish communities in the Americas and in Western Europe play in furthering the peace process?
8. If a new Arab political entity is to emerge, what should be its character and its relationship to Israel, to Egypt?
9. Do you have any additional comments with regard to the subject of the Arab-Israeli conflict?

As was to be expected, some of those invited felt themselves unable to participate. Fortunately, the distinguished group who did respond in the affirmative were conscious of the need and the opportunity, and made time in their schedules. The participation of several leaders among our Christian fellow-citizens has enriched the symposium by yet another perspective.

All of the writers were assured that their contributions would appear without editorial or other modifications, except for minor matters of style. Even these have been held to a minimum.

A sustained effort was made to secure statements from Arab leaders, particularly the P.L.O. We wrote and telephoned several times to their offices in New York, inviting a contribution from any designated spokesman. We tried to reach the two best-known representatives of the Palestinian Arabs in the United States, but with no success. We also wrote to Mr. Yasir Arafat, inviting a statement by him. We were informed that our letter was forwarded to him abroad, but no response was forthcoming.

This is particularly unfortunate, since the world press, with far greater resources at its command, has not been more successful than we, ourselves, in this regard. There has been, of course, no dearth of reports,

rumors, hints and attributions at second- or third-hand, and often contradictory to boot, purporting to transmit the views of Mr. Arafat and his associates. It would have marked a great step forward on the rocky road to peace had the specific goals of the P.L.O. with regard to Israel and its citizens been clearly articulated.

In the case of the government of Jordan, we were informed that there was no ambassador in the United States at the time, but that our letter of invitation would be forwarded to his successor. We regret that, when this issue went to press, no communication was received.

On the other hand, we are very much pleased that the Egyptian Ambassador to the United States, His Excellency El Sayed Abdel Raouf El Reedy, accepted our invitation. His most welcome contribution is published in the following pages.

We believe that the symposium contributes significantly to the clarification of the various positions now being espoused, and of the spirit underlying them. We fervently hope that time and human effort will help bring to the surface elements of agreement and reconciliation emerging from presently divergent positions. May these pages serve to advance the cause of justice and peace in the land where these ideals were first enunciated for mankind.

# *We Must Wait For Events*

KASSEL ABELSON

THE LAST FEW MONTHS HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT and painful ones. The unrest of the Palestinians, the growing death toll, and the depiction, by the media, of Israel as a heavily armored Goliath unable to subdue a stone-throwing David is the stuff of nightmares for Jews. Israel is the repository of Jewish hopes and the embodiment of age-old Jewish ideals, and to see it pilloried in the press, criticized as an occupying power that reacts harshly against an unarmed civilian populace leaves us uneasy — unable to reconcile our Zionist vision of Israel with the reality that screams out to us in the headlines, day after day.

When, last winter, the Intifada began, Israel's continued occupation of the West Bank and Gaza seemed, in the long run, untenable. It appeared obvious that Israel would be well advised to negotiate with the Palestinians with an eye towards establishing some type of Arab political entity, with whom it could co-exist in a peaceful relationship. Out of the Palestinians residing in these areas, a new indigenous leadership seemed to be emerging that would be able to speak for the Palestinians at a peace conference. The initiative of the United States, and the proposal for an international peace conference, seemed eminently reasonable, worthy of support. In short, the crisis on the West Bank appeared to create an opportunity to resolve a difficult situation that would only get worse with the passage of time.

Time *has* passed. The days have blended into weeks, and the weeks have added up to months. Yesterday's answers seem to be inadequate for today's questions. No indigenous leadership has emerged on the Palestinian side. Where are Palestinian representatives to sit at a peace conference and to negotiate a peace treaty? The PLO is torn by internal fighting, and even its public relations-oriented statements give no hint of flexibility. There are only cleverly worded offers to allow an International Conference to award it part of Palestine, without having to sign a peace treaty with Israel. No representative Palestinian voice is calling for anything but the establishment of a Palestinian state which would include Jerusalem.

I believe that, in any peace negotiations, Israel must be ready to make territorial concessions, but I am not convinced that such concessions will appease the Arab appetite, if not whet it for more, and more. If there are to be negotiations, and territorial concessions, then the Israelis, themselves, must make the decision. I, as an American Jew, secure in the

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United States, can voice my hopes for peace. I can suggest that Israel be ready to enter negotiations without any pre-conditions. I can suggest that Israel be flexible in negotiation, ready to make territorial concessions, in exchange for peace. But, at the same time, I know that it is Israel's existence that is at stake. And any mistakes made by Israeli negotiators will be paid for with the lives of Israel's best and brightest. In addition, I am haunted by the failure of the peace agreement with Lebanon, negotiated with the help of the United States, which preceded Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon. As soon as the Israelis had removed their troops, the Arab side renounced the treaty. Guarantees, whether by the United States, or by the UN, mean little when confronting the determination of one side to destroy the other. Since only Israel will fight for its continued existence, it is Israel that must make the decisions as to what is in its best interests and what will best guarantee its survival.

We Jews, who live in America and elsewhere in the Diaspora, must wait patiently for events in Israel — and in the Arab world — to demonstrate what is possible, what is desirable, and what is realistic.

# *No Preconditions to Peace Talks*

MORRIS B. ABRAM

THE PALESTINIAN REBELLION THAT ERUPTED last November in Gaza and the West Bank has finally reached the most metropolitan of Israeli cities — Tel Aviv. Something must be done, not only to restore order, but also to induce a meaningful discourse between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Israel's desired goal is peace. The Palestinians' stated goal is the complete destruction of Israel as a Jewish State, but some Palestinian leaders have indicated that peaceful autonomy is their more realistic objective. If there is ever to be real peace, the Palestinians must soften their position, and both the Israelis and the Arabs must comply with the principles of U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338.

It should be obvious that Israel cannot responsibly end the occupation during a state of war. It cannot permit the occupied areas to be the staging ground for attacks against Israel proper. The violence of the rebellion is warfare; the weapons that are being used by the Palestinians are Molotov cocktails, rocks, crowbars, knives and human excrement. The targets are both Israeli soldiers and civilians, and the assaults are intended to maim and to kill. Israel must respond to these actions of force with military actions of preventive force. Nevertheless, Israel must recognize that the current unrest is a political assault as well as a military action. The situation, therefore, necessitates a political response.

The present state of affairs in the occupied territories is untenable. Israel can no longer argue, as Golda Meir once did, that there is no Palestinian problem. In the twenty-one years since the occupation began, an entire generation of Palestinians has grown up in territory occupied by Israel. They have no more love for Jordan than for Israel. These Palestinians began a grass roots campaign of terror directed at their occupiers. Only a political answer holds any promise of resolving their concerns.

I sympathize with the plight of the Palestinians. I do not doubt for a moment that they are terribly frustrated, or that they have legitimate and substantial grievances. For forty years they have been used as pawns by their Arab brethren. They have been abandoned and betrayed by the twenty sovereign Arab nations with whom they share a common tradition, language, religion and culture. And, in 1970 and 1971, King Hussein forcibly expelled and caused the deaths of thousands of them.

Israel has been a much more responsible guardian of the Palestinians than have her Arab neighbors. As early as 1949, Israel offered to repa-

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triate 100,000 Palestinian Arabs who had fled into Jordan and to pay compensation to those who did not wish to return. The offer was dismissed with contempt by the Arab states. Over the years, Israel has contributed more money than has oil-rich Saudi Arabia to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which operates two refugee camps in Gaza and the West Bank.

Israel is also the country that has tried to help the Palestinians in the refugee camps. In 1971 and, again, in 1981, Israel unilaterally built permanent housing for 60,000 former inhabitants of the Gazan refugee camps. Yet, every November, under Arab sponsorship the United Nations General Assembly passes a resolution calling upon Israel to return these people to the camps.

I am not optimistic about the prospects for peace between the Palestinians and the Israelis. In order to enter into any negotiation, both parties must be prepared to bargain in good faith. They must share the desire to reach a settlement through compromise. It is futile to negotiate if either party's position is totally rigid. I am not convinced that the Arabs are really interested in peace.

By the same token, any decision to return even a small portion of the occupied territories would provoke serious distress in Israel. Nevertheless, at Camp David, Israel proved that it was prepared to part with land in exchange for peace. Israel and Egypt signed the Camp David Accord, which has outlasted the tenures of all of its principal architects, because the leaders of each country were willing to sit together at a peace table. Although Israel has continually invited other Arab leaders to join in similar peace talks, no Arab leader since Sadat has had the courage to do so.

On the contrary, the Arabs have objected to any negotiations with Israel. Following the Six Day War, when Israel was attacked by the combined forces of Syria, Egypt and Jordan, Israel offered to return all of the territories that it had captured in exchange for a peace settlement. The Arab states met in Khartoum and issued their infamous statement: "No negotiations, no recognition, no peace with Israel."

Last fall, when Secretary of State Shultz was in the Middle East, he invited both King Hussein and Prime Minister Shamir to begin direct peace talks in Washington during the Reagan-Gorbachev Summit. This would have given the peace talks the blessing of both super powers. Prime Minister Shamir accepted the invitation; King Hussein declined. Once again, Arab intransigence wasted an opportunity to move toward peace.

To be sure, Israel occasionally acts in a manner that varies from the central core of its ideals. But, as a democracy, Israel has a self-correcting mechanism to restore it to the proper path. Israelis hold themselves to a very high standard of morality. When news of Sabra and Shatila broke, a fifth of the population marched — the equivalent of 45 million Americans — and successfully demanded an investigation of the charges that

Israel might not have done enough to prevent Lebanese Christians from killing Palestinian Moslems.

The Middle East is an especially volatile part of the world. As a Jew who loves Israel, and as an American who appreciates the virtue of democracy, I am firmly committed to an alliance between both countries based on shared democratic values and shared strategic interests. The violence and regrettable loss of life resulting from the riots is dangerous and disfiguring to people for whom peaceful coexistence is the only alternative.

In my judgment, Israel should issue an open invitation to any credible Palestinian leader who is not identified with terrorism and who is willing to begin direct peace talks in Jerusalem. There should be no preconditions to the initiation of such a process. But if the Palestinians are not prepared to forswear their covenant of hatred and terrorism and to recognize the state of Israel, then Israel would be absolutely correct in refusing to yield any land. I am confident that if a group of nonviolent Palestinians emerges, ready to live in peace with Israel, or if the present Palestinian leaders abjure violence, then Israel, encouraged by a new rapport, will be prepared to make concessions.

# ***Do We Know The Problem — Are There Solutions?***

**DANIEL J. ELAZAR**

ISRAEL'S RESPONSE TO THE PRESENT disturbances must be two-pronged. First and foremost, it must restore order in the territories so that it is clear to the Arabs and the world that Israel is negotiating from strength. This should be done in the most humane way possible, but firmly, so that the other side understands that Israel has the will to maintain its position in the territories unless it is to its advantage to alter it. It must be clearly understood that civil disturbances of this kind, no matter how popularly based, can be put down if the will is there to do so. In this respect, the most humane punishment for chronic offenders is deportation, better than shooting, beating, or imprisonment. The use of the word should not confuse us. We are not speaking of deportation to some kind of forced labor camp or worse. We are talking about expulsion to friendly neighboring territories. Where minors are involved, humanity requires us to send their families along with them so that they will have an appropriate support system.

The second prong is to pursue the possibilities of a negotiated settlement. In my opinion, Israel should indicate its acceptance of the Shultz plan, albeit with certain reservations and clarifications, as the best available effort to begin negotiations. I must say that I am not sanguine about the prospects. All the parties involved have contradictory pulls which create tremendous ambivalence toward any negotiated settlement and, essentially, have paralyzed Israel, the Palestinians and Jordan. But we must never stop trying. While Israel should do what it has to, to take the initiative, neither the Jews nor the world should put the entire onus on us. We are not the cause of the problem, and while it is in our interest to pursue a solution, we do not have to act foolishly in the effort to do so.

There are several non-negotiable requirements to achieve security for Israel. They are (1) no foreign army west of the Jordan River; (2) no independent Palestinian state west of the Jordan; (3) a continued Israeli presence in all parts of Erez Israel west of the Jordan; (4) no very large Arab minority within Israel; (5) a state of peace, formal if possible, informal if not, between Israel and at least two of its three strongest Arab neighbors; (6) a close supportive relationship with the United States as

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the dominant great power in the region. Each of these elements embodies a degree of flexibility even as it establishes a non-negotiable bottom line.

The Palestinian Arabs, as individuals, have legitimate rights to a government instituted with their consent as a democratic principle. The degree to which they have the right of group self-determination is less clear. Even assuming that they constitute a separate people, the realities of the world clearly indicate that not every separate people has the right to an independent state. The Scots and the Welsh, for example, will have to find their future within Britain, just as the Basques and the Catalonians must find theirs within Spain. This limitation is particularly valid in the case of people with dual national identities. Thus, the Scots and the Welsh are separate peoples but they are also British. No matter how separate the Palestinians may believe themselves to be as a people, they also see themselves as part of the larger Arab nation. Hence, it is not unreasonable to require them, at the very minimum, to be integrated into Jordan on a federal basis. Sociologically and economically, Jordan is a Palestinian state. Hence, there is no need for any other, even by the most rigid principles of self-determination. What is needed is for the Palestinians already living in Jordan to claim full rule over Jordan and then to make an arrangement with Israel with regard to the territories and their brethren west of the Jordan River.

As for the Israeli Arabs, they have the right to preserve their language, culture, and religion as a group. As individuals, they should have full civil and political rights and equal access to the benefits of the society to the extent that they assume equal responsibilities of citizenship, in fact as well as in theory. Perhaps, if, in the course of negotiations toward a permanent solution, certain Jewish settlements are left within the territory under Arab rule and are given minority rights or special status as enclaves, a similar status can be arranged on a parity basis for Arabs in Israel should they wish it.

The future of Jerusalem depends in no small measure on the resolution of the overall conflict, since the possibilities for Jerusalem will depend upon the nature of that solution. Any solution, however, would have to provide for Jerusalem to continue as a single city under Israeli jurisdiction. If some kind of federal solution is reached, then Jerusalem can be the federal capital and defined as a separate capital district in which the federated entities have a share. If there is some kind of repartition, then the most that could be relinquished to the Arab entity would be some standing with regard to Muslim holy places. The Arabs cannot have it both ways. They cannot reject cooperative arrangements and expect Israel to repartition Jerusalem at the cost of free access to all parts of its holiest city.

This principle must be clearly established in connection with any settlement. The Arabs shall not be compensated for not playing ball, and reward will come to them only when they cooperate. If their hatred of

Jews and of the Zionist enterprise were the sole criterion of whether or not the Zionist enterprise were to succeed, we would never have had a Jewish state. There is no reason, now that we have one, to allow Arab rejection of Jewish peoplehood and statehood to be the determinant of our behavior. We must make it clear that, in the interests of peace, we are willing to cooperate to the point of making concessions, but only on a quid pro quo basis. The Arab notion that compromise is a sign of weakness and that only intransigence will bring them what they want has not worked so far and it need not work now.

As Jews, we need not be interested in political and diplomatic steps designed to advance the interests of the parties. We need to be interested in such steps designed to advance the interests of Israel. Negotiating the safety of Israel is not a Sunday school exercise and one need not feel any obligation to advance the interests of the Arabs who, long since, should have found their satisfaction in building a strong Arab state with or without Israeli assistance (and such assistance gladly would have been forthcoming) in the half of historical Eretz Israel east of the Jordan that was allocated to them in the 1922 partition. That, I believe, is the extent to which we are required to recognize Palestinian Arab or any other Arab interests and that only because of the Jewish sense of justice as involving generosity and not only right.

The Arabs, in their consistent unwillingness to compromise, have forfeited any right to our being concerned for their interests except insofar as it is in our interest to do so. On the other hand, prudence requires that Israel recognize the reality of the Arab presence west of the river and seek to define its own interests with regard to that presence. In that connection, Israel should pursue reasonable peace initiatives or take advantage of those pursued by others. Simply saying "no" and "never" will not advance Israel's interests. In this connection, accepting Secretary of State Shultz's proposals, while giving them an interpretation in accord with Israel's interests, would have been an appropriate step in March of 1988. Whether it still will be by the time this comment is published, I cannot foretell.

With regard to an international conference, as a general rule international conferences are convened only to tie up the loose ends on agreements that have already been reached in more private negotiations. Thus, while Shimon Peres was correct in stating that an international conference was necessary, his timing was off, while Jordan's demand of an international conference was designed strictly to serve its interests, to make it seem as if it were seeking peace, while creating a situation in which no peace could be achieved. It is not our obligation to serve Jordan's interest in this regard. Rather, we should let King Hussein know that if this is the best that he can do, he is not a suitable partner for peace and we ought to turn to the Palestinians directly, including the Palestinians in Jordan.

Our obligations to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan are only to

support it as long as it serves our interests. For many years, we had a mutual interest manifested in relative moderation on the part of the Hashemite king and Israel's support for the maintenance of the Hashemites on the throne. But it may no longer be to our mutual advantage. Hussein must be made aware of the realities of a change in our position.

The American government will have to play the leading peace-making role in resolving the conflict. However, it may not be able to initiate that peace, just as Sadat had publicly to initiate the Israel-Egypt peace treaty (after private initiatives by Israel) but both sides required the United States to fine-tune the general agreement that they reached bilaterally. The Soviet Union has interests in the Middle East and, thus, any agreement would have to have at least its tacit approval. In some cases that will come because the Soviet Union has no choice. Now, however, it seem to have been dealt back into the situation. Whether it was necessary or wise for the Americans to do so is a question that need not concern us here. The reality is that the Soviets are back in and the Americans will have to worry about that more than will the Israelis. As far as the United Nations is concerned, its only possible role would be to bless accomplished facts, something which it is not likely to do, just as it did not in the case of the Israeli-Egyptian treaty. So, for our purposes, it is useless as long as it remains dominated by blocs that are intrinsically hostile to Israel.

What would happen if the Soviet Union were to join with the United States to establish a settlement is another story. That is not entirely impossible. It may be that the Middle East will be another conflict area that the Soviet leaders want to clean up so that they can proceed with *glasnost* and *perestroika*. If so, they could bring about a very real change in all of this once an agreement were underway, including even a change in United Nations voting, but somebody would have to pay for that, most likely the United States, and the question is what price would the Soviets demand.

As far as the role of the Jewish communities of America and Europe, the major role that they should play is to come and settle in Israel. If even ten percent of them would do so, that would change the balance of power here and, thus, more fundamentally affect the terms of a settlement than anything else imaginable. The reason why Israel is having the problems that it is now having is because of the historic failure of the Jewish people to respond to the Zionist vision by returning to Zion. One does not have to believe that the diaspora has no future to believe that the most important thing that the diaspora could have done in the twentieth century is to have sent another million Jews to the Jewish state. Ten to twenty percent of the total number of Jews in the diaspora would have been enough to transform everything.

Three times diaspora Jews had the chance — in the immediate aftermath of World War I and the Balfour Declaration, after 1948 and the establishment of the state, and after 1967. Three times they failed, just

as the Jews of the diaspora failed in the period between Cyrus the Great and Ezra and Nehemiah. We paid bitterly for that earlier failure. Let us hope that we do not pay similarly for this one.

Having thus failed, the most important thing for diaspora Jews to do is to keep quiet and simply support Israel as asked. On the other hand, I recognize that this is an impossibility. Jews are not like that, and the willingness to accept restraint is a matter of self-discipline, not something that others can impose on them. Since diaspora Jewish leaders are bound to get themselves involved, what they need to do is to exercise humility and self-restraint and to ask themselves always: am I taking the position that I do because I believe that it is right or because I do not want to be embarrassed in the non-Jewish world? Given the risks that I take, is it reasonable for me to insist on a position that requires Israel to take greater risks? The fact that certain American Jewish leaders pushed Secretary Shultz to embrace the international conference idea after he so correctly opposed it for so long is not to their credit, even if, in doing what they did, they were responding to the initiative of Shimon Peres.

# *An International Conference For Peace*

EL SAYED ABDEL RAOUF EL REEDY

THE TRUE NATURE OF THE PROTRACTED conflict between Israel and the Arabs is that it is a conflict between the Palestinian people who have been under Israel's military occupation for more than twenty years, and Israel as the occupying power. It has also focused attention on the fact that what the Palestinians in the occupied territories are asking for is to be free of foreign occupation, to govern themselves, and to be afforded their right to self determination. In brief, equal rights and mutual co-existence with the Israelis.

Consequently, the uprising has proved that the *status quo* is untenable and that a new reality is in the making. As a matter of fact, even those in Israel who are opposed to evacuating the occupied territories concede that the *status quo ante* cannot be restored. It becomes, therefore, essential that we should construct a mechanism or a vehicle through which the process of transforming the *status quo* of occupation into a new relationship would take place, where the population of the West Bank and Gaza would be free from foreign rule and free to establish peaceful relations with their Israeli neighbors. A peace process is, therefore, needed to channel this transformation.

The idea of convening an International Conference for the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations has already acquired a great deal of momentum. It is accepted by the United States, the Arab parties and the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. In Israel, however, the government is divided almost right down the middle on this issue.

Such a conference would be attended by all of the concerned parties and the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council. Its purpose would be to initiate the process. The conference would not be a substitute for negotiations. It would, rather, be a framework for direct and bilateral negotiations to take place between the concerned parties. Palestinian participation could take place through a Palestinian-Jordanian delegation. The negotiations would be based on Security Council Resolution 242 that seeks to establish peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors. According to the Resolution, Israel would withdraw from the territories that it occupied in 1967.

Egypt's historic initiative to conclude peace with Israel started a powerful trend in the Arab world. It was of such a dramatic impact that while,

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at the outset, it was resisted, it nevertheless continued to gain more and more ground and acceptance. Today, the collective will of the Arab world is clearly in favor of concluding peace with Israel. The mood is that enough is enough and it is time to leave the past behind us and strike a historic compromise that would end the *status quo* of hostility and establish a new relationship between the Arabs and Israelis; a relationship of mutual coexistence and respect, mutual security and mutual recognition with the fruits of peace shared by both sides.

It would be a pity not to capture this mood and this opportune moment and fail to engage in a process of negotiation ignited by the international conference that could lead to a peaceful settlement in the interest of both sides.

With the Reagan Administration coming close to the end of its term, it becomes critical to put the process on track so that the next administration can readily use it without wasting one or more years. Time, therefore, is of the essence. The continuation of the present situation, namely the absence of both peace and a peace process, would only lead to a further deterioration.

Further escalations would lead to further polarization and radicalization on both sides. The picture that we have today is already a picture of mass violations of human rights. We also think that the new environment in Soviet-American relations could be a helpful and encouraging factor in improving the chances for an international conference.

Let us not forget that the Palestinian people are equally entitled to live in peace, freedom and dignity, and to exercise their God-given right to self determination.

Today we think that an opportunity does exist. Let us seize it before it is too late. Nothing can be more worth our efforts than the noble cause of peace.

# *Proceed With Caution*

THEODORE ELLENOFF

1. AS ADMINISTRATOR OF THE WEST BANK AND Gaza, Israel has the responsibility for maintaining law and order in those areas in a fashion appropriate to the threat, and consistent with police actions in Western countries. The riots threaten the safety not only of the troops, but of Jewish and Arab civilians alike.

As for the local Palestinian leaders and their supporters outside, they must realize that continued escalation of violence will only perpetuate the tragic cycle of death and suffering, but will not produce a political solution. Israel cannot be expected to grant far-reaching concessions while its citizens and others under its jurisdiction are being injured and killed as a result of Palestinian violence. Granting concessions under duress would only serve to encourage extremist elements among the Palestinians, who would then see that violence is a successful political tool.

A constructive effort at this juncture would be for the Palestinians to call a halt to the violence, garner the advances they have made in world public opinion, and agree to join in negotiations with Israel and Jordan. The conflict need not be resolved in a comprehensive plan, but, rather, via step-by-step implementation of a series of specific understandings, in order to facilitate the smooth transition from hostility to an atmosphere of mutual trust and cooperation.

2. The first item required for Israel's security is a strong defense force. Substantial Arab rejectionism is likely to persist at least into the foreseeable future. Thus, Israel must have the means at its disposal for repelling any invasion by one or more Arab armies. If Israel lets down its guard (as it did in 1973) it will suffer the consequences.

The next item is secure, defensible borders. The Yom Kippur War would most certainly have ended in total disaster were it not for the depth of territory that Israel then controlled. While control of the entire West Bank may not be necessary for Israeli security, clearly a return to the pre-1967 cease-fire line with Jordan would carry extremely grave risk for the Jewish State. Demilitarization, radar, early warning stations and other methods for safeguarding Israel against surprise attack need to be carefully reviewed and implemented.

Finally, for long-term security, Israel needs peace with as many Arab states as possible. Although no other option exists in the face of contin-

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uing Arab belligerence, the constant draining of Israel's national resources into massive military expenditure will eat away at its already beleaguered economy, not to mention the demoralization of its population, which has been asked to sacrifice so much for so long.

3. Palestinian Arabs within the borders of Israel are full citizens of the State of Israel. In spite of the on-going war against Israel waged by the Arab countries and the psychological tensions that such hostility produces within the country, the integration of this ethnic minority into Israeli society has made considerable progress since 1948. With peace, the rights of Israeli Arabs should be assured in all fields. Compulsory Arab language and culture studies in all Jewish school would help to foster the process of Arab-Jewish understanding on the social level.

The Arab residents of the West Bank and Gaza must be given political self-expression if their legitimate rights are to be satisfied. This self-expression can take shape in many possible ways; the present challenge is to find a way that balances the security needs of Israel, those of the Palestinian Arabs in the territories, as well as those of the surrounding Arab states.

4. Jerusalem is, and should remain, the undivided capital of Israel. Its status is not subject to negotiation. The peace agreement should build upon and codify the present Israeli policy of freedom of access for adherents of all faiths to their respective holy places as well as develop modalities for peaceful cooperation among the Palestinian and Israeli inhabitants. While the Knesset, courts, and Government of Israel will continue to be headquartered in Jerusalem, provision might also be made for appropriate Palestinian institutions. Needless to say, the embassies of the Arab countries at peace with Israel should be in Jerusalem, as should the embassy of the United States.

5 and 6. The United States should continue to use its good offices to try to ameliorate the Arab-Israel conflict. All effective agreements reached thus far in the Arab-Israel arena, including those under UN auspices, were achieved through the active involvement of an American mediator. The United States is the only superpower that maintains active working relations with both Israel and the major Arab states bordering it; it is the only serious mediator that can be trusted by both sides.

Any substantive ongoing role for the UN or the USSR should be resisted, in view of their record of hostility to Israel and their partisanship on behalf of Arab demands. However, there have recently been indications that the Soviets may soon improve their relations with Israel. If the Soviets would be willing to normalize diplomatic relations with Israel and permit substantial and sustained emigration of Russian Jews, then there

would be reason to re-evaluate the issue of Soviet participation in the Middle East peace process.

7. The Jewish community here and in Western Europe can further the peace process in several ways:

a) by giving Israel the moral and material support that it needs to stand up to the challenge of the rioters in the West Bank and Gaza;

b) by explaining to the world the history of the Arab-Israel conflict. There is a dire need to place the current events in their proper historical perspective, something alarmingly absent from much commentary on this issue. The world must understand the grave injustice perpetrated by the Arab world against both Israel and the Palestinians;

c) by serving as a link between the United States and Israel. American Jews are sensitive to the needs of both countries, and can be quite helpful in facilitating communication between them, encouraging Israel to take the necessary risks for peace and assuring continuation of American support for Israel.

8. A new Arab political entity that could satisfy the principles of UN Security Council Resolution 242, as well as the needs of all parties at this stage, would be an autonomous, self-governing unit in some part of the West Bank and Gaza. The Arab residents of those areas must be able to hold elections, assume control of power and water resources, run their own everyday affairs, and experience the difficulties associated with self rule. The authority of the autonomous unit cannot immediately take on certain rights and duties of a sovereign state, such as maintaining an army and conducting foreign affairs. That is so for several reasons.

To begin with, the atmosphere is now highly charged and fraught with tension and hatred. The relationship between Israel and the Palestinian unit will be very delicate, full of pitfalls for those who fail to act with moderation. Thus, there is a need for a period of adjustment, in which Israel and the Palestinians must literally learn how to co-exist peacefully.

A Palestinian political entity must not be permitted to pose a threat to the security of the region. The birth of the entity will require very careful supervision and midwifery, lest the newborn turn into a monster. A possible power struggle among PLO factions, or between the PLO, the Islamic fundamentalists, the Communists, and others, could easily turn into a bloodbath. Like Lebanon, such a pseudo-state would invite outside intervention and exacerbate Arab-Israeli and inter-Arab hostility.

Thus, the best way to proceed is with caution. Palestinian political self-expression is in the best interests of all, but only if it is a positive self-expression, based on a commitment to building a *modus vivendi* with its neighbors. Hopefully, in time, a fruitful common market relationship will develop among Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian entity along the lines of the Benelux countries in Europe. This arrangement could be strengthened by an infusion of economic aid from major world powers and from the Arab states.

# *The United States of Israel*

MARK FELBER

## *Introduction*

THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS MAY VERY LIKELY be one of the most intractable geopolitical problems to face mankind. In the pages which follow I propose (1) a general method by which a solution may be found, and (2) a first attempt to utilize this general method to formulate a specific solution.

Historically, the Jewish People have had to confront reality with a double burden: dealing with the exigencies of life confronting all mankind, as well as the task of remaining true to our Torah and our tradition. The former arises inevitably out of the condition of being human. The latter arises voluntarily out of the covenant that we made with God. This double burden has become virtually unbearable in our efforts to confront the Palestinian problem. But if we can be committed to anything at all from the outset, it is this: If we are going to emerge victoriously from this struggle, it will be only by surmounting both challenges simultaneously.

## *The Challenge*

This union of reality and Jewish morality is best expressed by the national symbol of the Israeli. Like the cactus which bears the name, it implies an external ruggedness and thorniness coupled with an internal sweetness and goodness. This, in short, is the underlying character of the solution which I propose. To the outside world, which will not give us an inch, we must remain tough and strong. We must add decisiveness, direction, and unity. Concurrently, within, we must be as benevolent and moral as we are tough and strong without. We must work, as never before, to practice the morality and spirituality that we have paid so dearly to preserve.

Here, then, are what I deem to be the incontrovertible issues that any further proposal for a secure Israel must address.

### 1. The Need For A Homeland For The Jews

After the destruction of the Second Temple, the desire to return to Israel was a nationalistic and religious dream. The next two thousand

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*His paper arrived in our editorial office while the symposium was being projected and we believe it to be an interesting contribution to the discussion.*



years offered poignant premises for an argument that, in the long run, there can be no diaspora Jewry. Then the Holocaust brought all of these arguments together in the resounding conclusion that we absolutely must have a secure homeland if we are to endure.

This is not proud nationalism, but bare physical survival which every living entity has a right to foster. The would-be detractor need only consider any period of world history since Rome sacked Jerusalem and it will provide ample objective evidence for the defensibility of this argument.

## 2. We Cannot Rely On The Good Will Of Others.

This is not paranoia but sober historical precedent. Whatever the Jew attained throughout history, it was by himself, and at extraordinary cost. As much as we may wish to trust, to cooperate, and to let bygones be bygones, harsh reality cannot be overlooked. If Israel is to survive, it will not be as the result of the morality or benevolence of mankind. Any solution that presupposes the nobility of others as crucial factors in any equation for peace in Israel is headed for disaster.

## 3. Therefore, We Must Do It Ourselves.

This is merely the conclusion to the syllogism:

- a. Israel must prevail
- b. No one else is going to ensure survival for us.
- c. Ergo, we must bring it about ourselves.

## 4. Land For Peace.

The Jew is prepared, at any time, to trade land for peace. But the fact of the matter is that there is no trading land for peace. There is no peace now, and there would be none if we gave in to every claim that the Arab World asserted. Even if we were to desert the land altogether, as called for by the Palestinian leaders and anti-Zionists, there still would be no peace in the land of Israel.

What is possible is that, perhaps, some day, we can negotiate about land in peace. But, until that time, even entertaining such an idea in the present global political arena can only accrue swiftly to our disadvantage.

## 5. The Arab: Understanding Our Opponents.

As a human being, the Arab, like the Jew, is created in the image of God. As an individual, he has the same inalienable rights as any other human; he must be treated with love and reverence. To devalue him ontologically is racism for which there is no defense. In aggregate, however, the Arab is our sworn enemy. He has said so officially in his manifestos and he has demonstrated it relentlessly in every act and situation.

The Arab wishes to destroy us; we have no wish to destroy him. He wishes to hate us; we wish to love him. We long to solve the problem; he longs to inflame and perpetuate it. The Arab world has land and re-

sources sufficient to extinguish this strife in a flash, at virtually no cost and little sacrifice. But the Arab will not do so.

How can we prevail upon the Arab to treat us as his brother when he treats his own brother as an enemy? If he cannot get along amidst his own people, within his own land, how is he ever going to get along with us, within our borders?

Some still seek for "moderate Arabs." But all too often a moderate Arab is a dead one. The feeble voice of Arab moderation is silenced with the same ruthless terrorism as that brought to bear against Israel. Some still believe that the Arab will respond to gestures of good will, but the contemporary Arab has difficulty apprehending good will. He has been nurtured on hate and violence. He is desperate and enraged; he is historically myopic; and his fundamentalist religion teaches him that salvation follows immolation.

The world knows this, too, and so it beguiles us: "Let us speak for the Arab, we'll work it out!" How we wish that this were true! But we cannot forget that the last time we needed the world to "work it out," it cost us six million lives. What might the cost be next time?

#### 6. The Commitment To Morality.

While all of the above may be the undeniable truths of a stark unremitting reality, if we are to remain true to our historical and spiritual ideals we cannot confront them in the manner of the nations of the world. We cannot paint a propaganda picture which belies the truth, nor can we treat human beings as means, as opposed to ends. We cannot resort to discrimination, suppression, and terror, nor can we forsake truth, justice, and humanity. Whatever the solution may be, it must be not only pragmatic, but it must embody the noble and godly ideals which we preserved through the ages

#### *The Sabra Solution*

I can see but one solution and we must announce it to the world unabashedly and begin immediately to put it into action.

1. One of our obligations as the "light unto nations" is to teach history to the world. Our claims have little legitimacy if we sever the present from the past. Without history the Palestinian claim is virtually equivalent to the Israeli claim. Without history a broken skull is, indeed, worse than a thrown stone.

I am advocating a propaganda war. We are being victimized by a false, though dramatically effective, one; let us fight back with an equally effective but true one. The truths of our history are far greater than even the most extravagant lies that our contemporary foes can concoct. They use the media; why can't we? We must show the world that our claims are just and right, by all standards and against all criteria. We must show this

to our own people as well. The unity that we so desperately need can come about only through education.

2. Israel must declare outright and unequivocally that, for the next ten years (or whatever number those wiser than I in geopolitical matters may wish to substitute), we are not willing to negotiate with anyone. We won the land after we were repeatedly and viciously attacked by our enemies, who sought not only our land but our utter destruction. We emerged victorious. Now the land is not "occupied territory" but Erez Yisrael. All territories will be formally annexed; they will become officially part of the State of Israel.

3. Israel must immediately convene a constitutional convention on the basis of which the nation will be divided into separate states analogous to the United States of America. Each new state will have equal representation in the newly formed federal government.

4. The "territories" will become separate states with precisely the same legal status as any other state. The inhabitants, provided they are law-abiding, will become full-fledged citizens of the "United States Of Israel" with the same rights and duties as all other citizens.

5. If, within the allotted period, the new Arab states in Israel demonstrate convincingly that they are capable of living peacefully within the land, and if the rest of the Arab world, during this period, will wholly respect the sovereignty, autonomy, and legitimacy of the State of Israel, and, if then, the Arab states wish to negotiate some form of peaceful secession from Israel which will not jeopardize our security, then, and only then, will negotiations begin.

This time the olive branch will come from the outside, not from the Jew. We have denuded our olive groves with all of the branches that we have distributed throughout the centuries. In the meantime, we are not terrorists. We do not murder for the sake of the media. Every individual human soul is sacred to us. In this spirit, the citizens of our new state are invited to build a pluralistic land of morality, strength, peace and prosperity.

### *Objections*

There will be objections to this solution and here is how they should be dealt with.

#### 1. The World Will Never Allow It

The world will be outraged, vituperative, and threatening. But this is not new. As far as allowing it is concerned, that question is academic. The world is not "allowing" us to do what we are doing now, so what difference would it make? As for actively preventing us, that would depend upon how creatively we market our proposal, and how masterfully we succeed in forging global Jewish unity.

## 2. World Jewry Will Never Allow It

Even the most rudimentary familiarity with Israeli politics, and with the fragmented Jewish communities of the world, will make it obvious that any hope for instant Jewish unity is chimerical. In short, the Jews will not allow it, either.

This, too, is not a valid argument, for it can be voiced with equal legitimacy against any proposed solution.

My solution seeks to embody, in one coherent proposal, both the conservative and the liberal views without compromising either. It respects reality, which demands a heroic and, if necessary, military response. At the same time, it also respects our underlying spiritual ideals which place the value of liberty, equality, and humanity above all else. It declares to the world:

A. We are going to defend what is rightfully ours, like it or not.

B. Meanwhile, the integrity of no human being will be violated so long as he is willing to abide by the law and to respect the rights of others. Our singular tradition is based upon a union, a delicate balance, but not a compromise, of justice and mercy, law and love. What could more effectively qualify for the nucleus around which to rally global Jewish unity?

## 3. The Arabs Will Not Allow It

What use is it to fear that they will object when they already object to everything we say or do? Under these circumstances there is only one way to respond, and that involves unity, decisiveness, strength, and courage. Even a bad plan, in this regard, would be better than no plan at all.

The Palestinian Arab, within our borders, will be told one day that he is a citizen of Israel just like anyone else. Thenceforth, he shall be fully emancipated. To discriminate against him will be illegal. It shall be his land as much as it is the land of any Jew. He is free to stay, and he is free to go. If he has a claim on the ownership of any parcel of land, let him petition the courts. If he prevails, the land is his. "There will be one law for him who is born in the land and for the stranger."

## 4. Maintaining Democracy And The Jewish Character Of The Land

Israel is (a) A Jewish state and (b) a modern western democracy. I can already hear the laments concerning Arab fecundity and the doom of the Jewish character of the state and its democracy in the plebiscites of the future.

This is nonsense !

First, the country must have a powerful unambiguous constitution. We have the benefit of 200 years of the evolution of the American Constitution to inspire and guide us. There should be no reason why the principles necessary for a perpetual democracy as well as a perpetual haven for diaspora Jewry cannot be forged indelibly upon this new constitution

as a fundamental Bill of Rights, so that its eradication would be forever illegal.

Further, there are scores of practical and legal means whereby to foster our political aims once we have a viable and stable government in place. Surely it is obvious that we can, for example, increase our own fruitfulness, as is our religious obligation. We can, if we wish, emigrate to Israel in larger numbers, as is also our religious responsibility. Moreover, the Arab birth rate is, in large part, the result of an impoverished and unwholesome condition of life. As a fully emancipated citizen in a thriving democracy, the Arab will prosper and ultimately respond to the same factors which have limited our progeny both in this country and in Israel. There are signs that this process is already under way.

### *Conclusion*

Neither the Arab nor the world will make peace with Israel whether we bribe them with land or with anything else. At the same time, the individual Arabs within our borders, regardless of how they got there, have inalienable rights as human beings. What I am suggesting is not a peace *proposal* — as it is lunacy to propose peace to those who would not have it; it is a *declaration* of peace and liberty in the spirit in which we are exhorted to do so by our Torah. It is a declaration of peace in the only manner possible without seriously distorting the realities of our epoch and the principles which have characterized us from the beginning as a light unto the nations throughout the ages.

# *Perspective and Patience are the Keynotes*

ABRAHAM H. FOXMAN

*1) In the face of the present disturbances, what steps should be taken now, and by whom?*

ONE'S THOUGHTS GO BACK TO THE YOM Kippur War, when Anwar Sadat used the psychological victory of the war to move on the political front. He, together with Henry Kissinger, set in motion a process that culminated in his visit to Jerusalem in November, 1977, the Camp David accords in September 1978 and the peace treaty of March 1979.

If there were signs that the Palestinians and Arab leaders were prepared to convert the violent protests into political change then one could view recent events with some hope. Unfortunately, there is nothing to indicate such a transformation. On the contrary, King Hussein of Jordan, the one Arab leader apparently moving in recent years toward the peace option, is more in need now of Palestinian legitimacy for such a move than before the disturbances. Palestinians have taken their destiny into their own hands and Hussein cannot go it alone. If anything, however, greater radicalism has emerged in the Palestinian camp in recent months. One hears nothing about open negotiations with Israel, either from Palestinians in the territories or from the PLO. Rather, one senses the reemergence of old illusions — that Israel has been weakened, that the world and, in particular, America, is now turning against Israel, that even American Jews are weakening — which make the possibility of negotiations more remote.

There remains one hope from these developments and that lies in the fact that the residents of the territories, at least at the outset, were acting on their own. They did so out of frustration and, perhaps, in time, this frustration will lead to a realization that the PLO has very different interests than they do; their main interest is to get Israel to withdraw from their lives as much as possible. That can happen only through negotiations, something that the PLO seems incapable of moving towards. To expect Israel to make concessions under the threat of violence or without negotiations is unrealistic.

Palestinians have an opportunity now. Israeli opinion seems to be supporting a harder-line approach while the riots continue, but if Arabs

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come forward there might be a new openness to concessions by Israel with the awareness of the price that must be paid for holding onto the populated areas.

In sum, fluidity in Israeli thinking depends on a breakthrough toward negotiations on the Arab-Palestinian side.

## 2) *Israeli security*

There has been a remarkable consensus within Israel, ever since the trauma of the period leading up to the Six-Day War: *i.e.*, that Israel cannot afford to return to the 1967 borders, what Abba Eban once referred to as “holocaust lines.” Both major Israeli parties today see the Jordan River as Israel’s security line, whatever the political solution for the West Bank itself. ADL has taken scores of U.S. congressmen, journalists, military officials, Blacks, Hispanics, and others to Israel and, whatever the individual reactions to politics, almost all who have seen, first-hand, Israel’s geo-strategic problem understand why Israel cannot allow any forces west of the Jordan.

Instability, rather than a stable peace, seems the inevitable consequence of any other security solution. If Arab forces were to be allowed in the West Bank, Israel would inevitably turn to preemptive military action at the slightest sign of Arab troop movement, since the distance to the Mediterranean would be so short.

## 3) *Legitimate rights of Palestinian Arabs in Israel, Gaza, and West Bank*

The Palestinian Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza must have the utmost in political self-expression within the context of several realities — Israel’s security needs, the fact that there is already a degree of Palestinian political expression within the Kingdom of Jordan, and the fact that Israel would find it impossible to turn over power to the PLO.

The Camp David accords pointed to reasonable solutions, those between the extremes of full Israeli withdrawal and an independent Palestinian state. Mixed solutions are the order of the day. In time, all kinds of possibilities could emerge, but only in an environment of greater trust and greater democratization in the Arab world.

As for the Arabs of Israel, of course they are full citizens of the country, but the future will determine whether they will identify with their fellow Israelis or with Palestinian Arabs throughout the region. That will depend on a variety of factors — treatment by the government of Israel, the power of Islamic fundamentalism and Palestinian nationalism, the course of the peace process. That Israeli Arab demonstrations during the disturbances are a shock to many Israelis indicates the delicacy of relations that have to be cultivated by both Arabs and Jews.



4) *Future Status of Jerusalem*

There are two points always made about Jerusalem — that Israel is united on its remaining undivided and the capital of Israel, and that it could be the most difficult of issues.

The former is clearly true. Jerusalem is the heart and soul of the Jewish people and no Israeli government could, or would, accept dividing the city or withdrawing Israeli sovereignty. Whether proposals within these parameters — including a borough system with autonomy for Arab areas, a flag on Islamic holy sites — are acceptable to the Arab world will depend on the success of negotiations on other issues and the power of Islamic fundamentalism.

5 & 6) *What political and diplomatic steps should be taken; what should be the roles of the American government, UN, Soviet Union?*

The role of the United States in the process must be central, because only America has the trust of both sides and because the United States is the party interested in a compromise agreement. That role should be fourfold; first, to make clear, over and over again, that its support for Israel is permanent, thereby eliminating the military option for the Arab world; second, to insist on direct negotiations without preconditions as the process needed for peace; third, to coordinate with Israel on the substantive parameters of an agreement; forth, to use its influence with the Soviets so that if they are to play a constructive role it must be based on something other than Israel-baiting and must involve pressing for concessions from the Arab side.

7) *The Jewish Community*

A disturbing element in recent months has been the public free-for-all in the American Jewish community on the subject of Israel. No one questions the right of American Jews to speak out, but the issue is one of responsibility, on two levels. It is Israelis who will live and die with the consequences of their decisions on fundamental security matters and there ought to be respect for that democracy and recognition that, much as we care about Israel, the situation there is qualitatively different from ours.

Secondly, the American Jewish community has played a constructive role in the making of American Middle East policy because of the perception of unity, despite private differences. A neutralized community politically, because of public differences, can enable those who are hostile to Israel to make hay with American policymakers.

In fact, there remains much common ground on which the community can unite. It is a worthy goal to seek out.

*9) Additional Comments*

Perspective and patience are the two keynotes that we as Americans and as American Jews must adopt. The Middle East is not the Middle West; Israel is still surrounded by states and parties that are authoritarian, radical and subject to extremism. This is not to suggest that pragmatism has no place; Anwar Sadat was a good Moslem and found the way to peace. But it cannot be taken for granted that others will follow, that the peacemakers will win out.

We must do all we can to encourage would-be peacemakers, with steadfast support of Israel being the primary ingredient for Arab consideration of peace. If there is an opportunity for peace it should be seized. But it is also possible that peace may not be in the cards in the years ahead and if this unfortunate development becomes reality, then we must show patience and stay with Israel until the climate is right.

# *Agonizing Choices*

DAVID M. GORDIS

WHAT SETS THE PRESENT MOMENT IN Israel's tempestuous forty-year history apart from the past is the fact that the focus has now moved beyond mere survival. The alternatives currently facing Israel represent a new opportunity for self-definition. Fateful decisions are involved, affecting not only safety and security, but the essential character of the State. The opportunity to make decisions of this type represents the fulfillment of a fundamental goal of the Zionist movement — the restoration of the Jewish people to an active presence in world events and to the capacity to shape its own future.

Furthermore, the choices that Israel faces are momentous for the totality of the Jewish people. One may assert or deny Israel's centrality in Jewish life, however many the different ways in which that centrality is defined. Acceptance of that centrality (and I do accept it) implies the existence of a world Jewry beyond the center whose fate is intimately related to the fate of the State of Israel. It seems to me, therefore, inconsistent to accept the principle of centrality and, at the same time, to argue that non-Israelis are not legitimate parties to the fateful deliberations which are underway regarding the character of the State. This is not to suggest that voting rights in Israeli elections should be extended to those who are not citizens of the State; it does suggest that a silence imposed on Diaspora Jewry, rooted in the assertion that only Israelis "have a stake" in Israel's future, is unacceptable. World Jewry should participate in discussions of Israel's strategic, political and economic concerns; we need to be involved in deliberations on ethical issues as well.

The choices which are to be made are real, also, in the sense that advocacy of one or another position on the basis of assertions of self-evidence are not persuasive. For example, it is not self-evident that Israel should be a democratic state, be committed to equality of opportunity, that it should embrace the principle of equal standing before the law or that it be pluralistic. Neither is it self-evident that it should be theocratic or homogeneous, or that it requires some particular set of borders for its security. Those who argue from a fundamentalist position for a theocratic Israel and reject totally the notion of the separation of religion and government often do so cogently and consistently. Their understanding of the Divine Covenant with Israel, and their understanding of the nature of a Jewish state need to be responded to, not vilified and excoriated.

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Their advocacy of maximalist territorial demands, expulsion of the Arabs of the West Bank, and the denial of equal rights to all Israeli citizens may be painful and repugnant, but it is not illogical or incoherent. Those who attempt to speak from a different religious perspective need to bear in mind that the Jewish religious right is able to ground its positions in scriptural and rabbinic references at least as well as their adversaries can, and it is, therefore, not likely that debate based on an exchange of scriptural or rabbinic sources will prove fruitful. The only response possible to a fundamentalist position grounded in a literalist messianism is to present an alternative vision of the State to those who must make the decisions, and to make that alternative vision attractive and compelling.

The choices to be made are not only genuine and fateful, they are agonizing. Simply put, on the most difficult issues — the status of minorities in Israel, how to preserve the Jewish character of the State of Israel, the future of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip — there are no perfect or even good alternatives. The choices are between bad and worse or, at best, between risky and disastrous. But the choices must be made, since inaction in a vain effort to perpetuate the status quo is, itself, a choice. The process boils down, then, to an evaluation of the available alternatives, and the selection of the least objectionable from among them.

Recent developments have both made matters more complex and opened new possibilities. In the light of King Hussein's disentanglement from the West Bank, or at least the apparent dramatic reduction in the level of his involvement, and the anticipated declaration by the Palestinians of either a government in exile or a provisional government, the situation is once again fluid rather than static. This is a moment of risk for Israel, but it may also prove to be a moment of opportunity. If a new opening for peace emerges, even with risks attendant to it, I hope it will be seized. If the proposed declaration by the Palestinians does, in fact, materialize — and at the time of this writing it is by no means certain that it will — and if it contains at least the implicit recognition of the State of Israel and an acceptance of the two-state principle, then I would hope that the response on the part of Israel will be to welcome the new Palestinian position and enter into a negotiating process to deal with the future of the West Bank and Gaza and open the possibility of the end of Israeli rule in those areas. My advocacy of this position is based on historical, moral/ideological and pragmatic considerations.

Those who would argue against the position of territorial compromise do so from one of two positions, religious/ideological or strategic. The religious position — that all of the land of Israel was promised by God to the Jewish People, and that "cleansing" or "purifying" the land from its non-Jewish population is a prerequisite for the imminent coming of the Messiah — is irrefutable but not persuasive. You either accept it or you don't, and, as a religious but non-literalist Jew, I cannot and will not confuse a long-term religiously grounded yearning and aspiration

with legal or political warrant. As far as the strategic argument is concerned, we ought to bear in mind that, following the Six Day War, a peace agreement in exchange for the return of the territories that were captured during the War was considered the most desirable outcome possible, but Arab intransigence dashed those hopes at an enormous price in blood and tears during the intervening years. Yet, despite the tragedy of those lost years, the strategic conditions which made that outcome desirable then have not deteriorated. From the point of view of Israel's self-interest, it is clear that technological developments in weaponry and electronics have made the security benefits of that territory, if anything, less critical. Threats to Israel are now primarily through missiles and airborne weaponry, so that the degree of security afforded by the presence of that buffer between Jordan and the population centers of Israel is not inconsequential but it is substantially reduced. And, as the West Bank becomes more heavily populated with Jews, it becomes more of a security burden on the state than a buffer zone and an enhancement to Israel's security.

In brief, then, the argument from religious fundamentalism is no more convincing now than it was forty years ago or twenty-one years ago. The argument for rejecting partition on the basis of security may be more compelling in the emotional wake of the disillusionment and disappointments of the last twenty-one years, but it is less persuasive strategically now. Territorial compromise means partition. The State of Israel was established through partition; most Jews hoped that the Six Day War would lead to peace agreements with Israel's Arab neighbors in the context of partition; and the principle of partition was reaffirmed by the State of Israel in the Camp David accords. Neither ideological nor strategic considerations have changed the picture.

I do not argue for unilateral withdrawal on the part of Israel. Neither do I advocate abandonment of Israel's security interests out of a newfound trust in Arab hopes and intentions. It may be that no satisfactory agreements can be reached with the Palestinians who may not be willing to compromise their maximalist demands. They may be unwilling to accept the limits on sovereignty which would be implicit in demilitarization. They may reject international guarantees which Israel may find necessary. But the attempt to reach an agreement should not be stillborn because of a real or perceived unwillingness on the part of Israel to deal honestly with the status of the territories or because of an out of hand rejection by Israel of any possible Palestinian entity.

I am concerned about the impact of the occupation on human rights in Israel and on the values guiding Israel's young people. Xenophobic patterns of behavior are now increasingly justified in Israel as sanctioned by Jewish tradition. Graffiti on the walls of Tel Aviv reading "*aravim haḥuzah!*" or "Arabs out!" shocks and resonates in unpleasant ways in the light of recent Jewish past, in spite of the euphemistic obfuscation of renaming expulsion "transfer." I admit to being shocked to hear from otherwise

reasonable and decent people that it is legitimate to kill Arab women and children because they are mothers of terrorists or potential terrorists, and that this is mandated by "Jewish ethics." I believe that, ultimately, the fate of Israel will be determined by the quality of its interrelationships — between Jews, between Jews and non-Jews in Israel, and between Israel and her neighbors. But I know that those concerns are looked upon as soft-minded and naive and, so, I prefer to base my argument primarily on considerations of Israel's self-interest. Israel's safety, security and well-being are best served by expressing an understanding of the political aspirations of the Palestinians and working towards a solution which will grant self-determination to the Palestinians in a way which is consistent with Israel's security needs.

Any solution will entail risk. But that risk must be weighed against alternatives, and the alternatives are all more dangerous. The current situation is unstable, and there is no long term possibility of restoring peace and order by suppressing the *intifada* with harsher measures. Though we would be happier if it did not exist, Palestinian nationalism will not simply dissipate. Annexation of the territories, linked to the expulsion of its Arab residents, will isolate Israel from her allies and friends, will almost certainly lead to a drastic cut in American aid and strain Israel's economy to the breaking point. Many Jews, in Israel and around the world, who are sensitive to the history of persecution and expulsion of our people, and aware of the often reiterated imperative in our tradition to treat the stranger as an equal because we ourselves were strangers in the lands of others, would react with outrage to such a step, and the moral standing of Israel in the eyes of the entire world would be mortally injured.

There are but two remaining possibilities: one, Israeli annexation of the territories, with the granting of equal rights to all residents of Israel and, two, Jewish domination of a disenfranchised Arab population. Of the two, the former is certainly superior both from security and morality standpoints. But this solution carries with it the well discussed "demographic timebomb." Can a democratic state with an Arab majority endure as a Jewish state? I believe that it cannot. A bi-national state could emerge, and that may not be catastrophic, but it would certainly profoundly affect the character of Israel and the ideal of Jewish national fulfillment. Finally, a Jewish minority ruling an Arab majority with limited political rights would be disastrous; it would be morally indefensible and structurally explosive. With all of the risks involved, the best of these imperfect alternatives is to seize the opportunity offered by a shift in the Palestinian position, if it materializes, by opening genuine negotiations which will include the discussion of Palestinian self-determination in the territories.

The overall character of a potential settlement, namely, a reestablishment of partition west of the Jordan River, is simple; the specifics are devilishly complicated. But the effort should be made. Even the issue of Jerusalem, often pointed to as the most intractable problem, may not be be-

yond solution. I am reminded of a comment made to me by a Palestinian-American political scientist with whom I was discussing the issue: "Of course, the international community must acknowledge that united Jerusalem is the capitol of Israel. But a way must be found to give expression to the Arab link to Jerusalem as well." I believe that this can be done though any of a number of plans which have been proposed, including a borough form of administration and the continued granting of extra-territorial status to Moslem holy places. Determining new and permanent borders will be difficult, but no serious student of the Middle East is now suggesting that a return to the pre-1967 borders is possible. Massive economic assistance in the area would be a vital element in any solution, and a federation of the new Palestinian entity with Jordan and Israel, including extensive economic interrelationships, would be vital. As costly as this program would be, it would represent a bargain for the major powers and for the states in the region whose defense and military expenditures are choking their economies and inhibiting growth and progress. A way can be found to extend citizenship to Arabs and Jews living outside of the respective areas of sovereignty of Israel and the new Palestinian entity, so that residents of the West Bank, who chose to do so, could remain where they were and maintain Israeli citizenship, though living under Palestinian sovereignty. A good deal of creative ingenuity will be required to devise an acceptable formula, but success is not beyond the realm of possibility.

Only the principals to the conflict can negotiate a settlement, and any negotiating framework should adhere strictly to that principle. But encouragement to begin the process, and articulated expectations of good will and seriousness of purpose on the part of the negotiating principals can be very helpful. The United States, world Jewry, the Soviet Union (if early signs of an interest on its part in playing a constructive role are not misleading), other major powers, Arab Americans, and the United Nations should all use their good offices and channels of communication to encourage movement towards peace. The negotiating principals, including Israel, need to bear in mind that compromise does not imply surrender on the part of any side. No one can expect to be fully satisfied by the outcome of these negotiations. All that needs to happen in order for them to be successful is that each side be convinced that its best interests are served by entering into the agreement that will be negotiated. In the light of the seriously flawed alternatives, negotiations with an eye to a restoration of partition west of the Jordan are the best option for Israel and world Jewry.



# *Israel and the Arabs — A Talmudic Solution*

*(with Apologies to Jacobowsky)*

LEON HYAMSON

IN THE TALMUD WE READ, "TWO MEN ARE holding fast to a cloak in a case before the court. The first one says, 'I found it,' and the other says, 'I found it.' The first one says, 'It is all mine,' and the second says, 'It is all mine.' Each one shall take an oath that he owns at least half of it and they then divide it."

There are two obvious observations on this ancient lawsuit. When the argument irrupts, neither litigant reckons with the claims of the other or even with his presence. Nor is either ready to accept part of the garment. Until the court steps in, there is an impasse.

The procedure set forth in this ancient rabbinic text, some seventeen hundred years old, can, I suggest, be applied to the intractable conflict between the Arabs and the State of Israel today.

There is only one self-evident pre-condition — the process cannot be put into motion unless, and until, overt violence between the two sides subsides. There can be no meaningful give-and-take while rocks and bullets are flying and one side or the other is perceived to be negotiating from a position of weakness. Only when a state of law and order is re-established in the country can the process begin.

The first step is for each side to draw up a declaration consisting of two parts. Part I of the Israeli declaration is to be a statement in which it will maintain that the Jewish people have a legitimate claim to the land of Israel, from the Jordan to the Mediterranean and from Lebanon to Eilat. It has been the Jewish homeland for over nineteen centuries of residence and nearly two millennia of aspiration and yearning. The claim is valid and unshakeable.

Part II of the Israeli declaration is to contain an equally forthright statement that the Arabs living in the country have a legitimate and valid claim to Palestine. Thirteen centuries have elapsed since the battle of Jarmush, in 635, when Islamic armies overran both Syria and Palestine. Historians disagree as to whether the country was settled by Arab warriors from the Arabian peninsula or whether the original inhabitants were persuaded to become Muslims through the slogan, "the Book or the Sword."

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LEON HYAMSON is a pen-name of a well-known figure in the American Jewish community. His paper, which was unsolicited, adopts a novel approach to the Arab-Israeli problem.

Practically, it does not matter. A residence of thirteen hundred years is sufficient to establish a valid and unshakeable claim for the Arab inhabitants of the country.

The Arabs living within the borders of the State of Israel, including "the occupied territories" in the West Bank and Gaza, will be asked by the government of Israel to select representatives of their own choosing to draw up a parallel declaration in two parts. In Part I, the Arabs will set forth their legitimate claim to Palestine as their homeland. Part II will declare that the Jewish people also have an equally valid and legitimate claim to the country as their homeland.

Both declarations will be issued to the world *simultaneously*. If one declaration is completed earlier, its promulgation will wait upon the other.

Will both sides, or even one, be prepared to indite and publish such a declaration? Is this a credible possibility? As Jacobowsky would remind us, there are two alternatives: either the Jews, or the Arabs, will agree to issue such a declaration, or they will refuse.

If the Israelis refuse, it will be clear to the world that Israel intends to remain an "occupying power." If the Arabs refuse, the fog in which the Arab position has been enveloped will be dissipated once and for all. It will be undeniable that the P.L.O. Charter, calling for the annihilation of Israel, remains the cardinal objective of the Palestinian Arabs, and that all the hints, innuendoes and confidential off-the-record reports about a change of goals among the Arabs are public relations ploys and no more. The hopeful slogan, "Land for Peace," will have proved to be a pipe dream. Not only the Israelis, but Jews the world over, and even the United Nations, will know the score. Israel may then feel free to decide to defend its survival to the best of its ability.

Though our proposal will have failed to advance peace, it will have succeeded in establishing the truth — no mean achievement.

On the other hand, sanity and moderation may win the upper hand in both camps. Both Arabs and Jews will have had their fill of violence and bloodshed and will produce the two declarations. They will then be ready for the next step.

In that event, the Israelis will choose a group of negotiators through a free, unconstrained electoral process. The Palestinian Arabs would select a parallel group of spokesmen to meet for negotiations with Israel. The government of Israel would play no part in the selection of the Arab representatives, nor place any restriction upon their choice, whatever their past record and present attitudes might be. The only pre-condition would be that both parties and their negotiators accept both parts of their respective declarations in their entirety, postulating the legitimate claims of both Jews and Arabs to Palestine.

There remains the technical problem of finding a formula of compromises and adjustments after long and difficult bargaining. The

Israeli-Egyptian negotiations at Camp David and the long impasse over Taba at the Gulf of Akaba, should disabuse anyone of the notion that these sessions would be quick and easy. But, behind all the rhetoric and passions, each party would know that its claims to the whole garment ("I found it," "It's all mine") are guaranteed *not* to be granted.

The meeting of the Israelis and the Arab delegations would not require the good offices of "honest brokers." Neither the moderate Saudis and Kuwaitis, nor the peace-loving Syrians and Iraqis, nor even the unbiased and fair-minded United Nations, nor even the two colossi, the United States and the Soviet Union, would be needed at the conference table. King Hussein of Jordan, who has been pirouetting on the edge of the seething Mid-East cauldron, might be invited by the two parties around the table. He could then decide whether to join the deliberations.

Would the conference succeed? Jacobowsky's alternatives still exist. Either it would or it would not! Even if it failed, at least the temperature of the confrontation would have been lowered. Violence and repression could hardly go on while the talks were in progress. Moreover, both Jews and Arabs would learn to know each other, something that living in the same land has not hitherto achieved.

Charles Lamb was once heard bitterly attacking an acquaintance. "How well do you know this man you hate so much?" he was asked. Lamb replied: "I don't know him at all. If I knew him, I could not hate him."

Whenever the next round of talks would come, it would be easier. The situation could scarcely be worse than the present state of affairs.

The basic conviction of this approach — that both the Palestinian Arabs and the Jewish people have a legitimate claim to the small piece of earth that they call their homeland — is, at present, bound to arouse the ire of all the groups involved in the conflict.

It is always the sad fate of those who adopt a moderate, center position to be exposed to attacks from both extremes, each of which demands total acceptance of its point of view. The genuine liberal believes that all legitimate goals are, or can be, in harmony with one another. Perhaps he displays a degree of over-optimism in his attitude, but he possesses a more hopeful approach to major problems. He is much less likely to fall prey to the fanaticism and the blindness of the "tunnel vision" characteristic of both extremes. He also has the insight to recognize that, in each position, there are valuable elements which he attempts to preserve in his own outlook. He is, therefore, likely to be closer to the truth.

Both Judaism and Islam believe in miracles. Perhaps a miracle would come to pass. The negotiations would succeed in finding a formula for both peoples to achieve part of their respective goals — less than they demanded, but more than they expected — the gift of peace. The Holy War would be replaced by the Holy Peace. The children of the Patriarch Abraham would recognize that they have one Father on earth and remember the words of the prophet Malachi, "Have we not one Father? Has not one God created us all?"

# *Needed — A Political Will For Peace*

JOHNE. JACOBS

LET ME BEGIN BY EXPRESSING RESERVATIONS about the tentative title of this symposium: "Israel and the Arabs: We Know the Problems — Are These The Solutions?"

Unfortunately, too many people do *not* know the problems. They are unable to perceive the depth of emotion on both sides. Others demonstrate lack of knowledge of the tortured history that is the backdrop of today's highly publicized struggles. And still others wear blinkers and are locked into sloganeering.

In fact, it is highly probable that we know more about the solutions than we do about the problem. The rough outline of a lasting solution has been on the table for a long time now.

It includes: normalized diplomatic relations between Israel and the Arab states; a self-governing, demilitarized Palestinian entity on the West Bank and Gaza; border adjustments to resolve Israel's security needs, and a compromise on Jerusalem that leaves the city united and open to both Israelis and Palestinians.

No matter how imaginative or bold a proposed solution to the Arab-Israel conflict, it will doubtless include most, if not all, of the above elements.

What appears to be missing are not solutions but political will. Worse, for most of the forty-year history of the conflict, one side or the other has been unable to respond creatively to opportunities for peace. For example, the Palestinian rejection of the UN partition in 1947 created today's untenable situation. Had Palestinian leadership acted wisely then, there would have been a Palestinian state born alongside of Israel.

The passage of time has resulted in the establishment of settlements in Judea and Samaria, and the erosion of a "land for peace" consensus within Israel. The Arab rejection of the Camp David peace process that would have led to a self-governing Palestinian entity in the occupied territories has deepened the dilemma and brought about today's impasse.

The principle of self-determination suggests political autonomy for the Palestinians. It is doubtful whether anything short of an independent nation-state would be acceptable to them at this stage. But it is possible that arrangements could be negotiated that would allow for progression from limited autonomy to statehood. For that to happen, the Palestinians

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need leadership with legitimacy among the people in the territories and the capacity for negotiating for autonomy.

As the strongest power in the region, Israel can respond creatively to the unrest by unilaterally declaring its intention to trade land for peace. It can make it unmistakably clear to the people of the occupied territories that the only thing standing between themselves and self-government is the failure of their own leadership and of the Arab states to negotiate a lasting peace settlement that includes recognition of Israel and permanent, agreed-upon borders.

Security for Israel must include the establishment of normal relations with its Arab neighbors. The untenable pre-1967 borders should be adjusted to maximize security, with the understanding that, in an age of missiles, minor border adjustments are not, in themselves, sufficient.

And, in a region torn by conflicts and the presence of aggressive, expansionist states, a strong armed force is the ultimate guarantor of national security. To that end, it is in Israel's interests to protect its American alliance and to seek international guarantees for any political settlement that it enters into.

Israel's fear of establishing an independent Palestine prone to irredentist policies and governed by a PLO sworn to Israel's destruction is understandable. Advocates of Palestinian statehood have the responsibility to demonstrate that such a state could live in peace with its neighbors. A demilitarization provision would thus be a logical component of any permanent agreement. And establishing stages of Palestinian autonomy would provide an opportunity for both sides to become accustomed to the altered political realities of living side-by-side and engaging in peaceful political relations.

After the experience of two decades of a divided city, with the desecration of Jewish holy places and the refusal to allow to Jews entry into the Old City, Israel will not accept anything less than a united city. Arab insistence on political control of Jerusalem is as strong, making this the toughest of the many issues of contention.

But Jerusalem's mayor, Teddy Kollek, has proposed a borough system of city government that would, in effect, bring autonomy to Arab sections of the city. And it would not be beyond the ingenuity of diplomats to devise arrangements whereby a united Jerusalem remains the capital of Israel while also being the capital of a Palestinian entity, with free access to all parts of the city for all people. What is required is a resolve to peaceful co-existence. With that, the rest will follow.

America can help the peace process through diplomatic efforts that ease Israel's fears of isolation and by pressuring Israel to trade land for peace. The U.S. alliance with Israel is important to both countries, but it may be true, as Abba Eban has said, that "we've gained an ally but lost a mediator." At this stage of the game, the U.S. may be more helpful to

Israel as a mediator, a role that would require a more even-handed stance.

It is too often forgotten that Israel is a democratic society confronted with a threat to its existence. It has little margin for error, for the aim of its opponents is not territorial adjustment but the dismantling of the state itself and the denial of self-determination to Israel's Jews. Faced with such a perilous situation, it is hard to counsel risk-taking.

But Israel is equipped to take risks for peace — it is the most powerful nation in the region and it has the most to gain from peace. Already, the necessities of occupation have become increasingly difficult to reconcile with democratic ideals and practices. Holding on to the occupied territories indefinitely will only weaken those ideals further, and the demographics are such that Jews will become a minority within their own state. It seems that reasoned risk-taking is far better than the inevitable disasters that would result from clinging to an unsustainable *status quo* or engaging in further rounds of warfare.

Self-interest suggests that both Israel and the Palestinians take more flexible stands to secure a peace that grants self-determination to the Palestinians and security and recognition to Israel. The time is ripe for such approaches.

The major barriers appear to be psychological: Israelis fear that compromise equals national suicide and the Palestinians are under the delusion that self-determination means destroying Israel.

Both parties have legitimate claims to self-determination and to mutual respect, and, while many say they can never co-exist, it is useful to recall that the long enmity between the French and the Germans has been transformed into cooperation and alliance.

# *The Only Solution*

MEIR KAHANE

I SIT HERE, IN JERUSALEM, AND CONTEMPLATE a request for a reply to, "The Arab-Israeli Conflict — Are These the Solutions?" And, of course, I know the solution. And, of course, I know that no one else of the Jewish leaders who have been invited to advance "solutions" will advance this one. And I know — sadly — that of all the Jewish "solutions" proposed in this symposium not a single one will deal with it because — and here is the tragedy of our times — not one of the "select group of leaders and thinkers" (to quote the invitation from JUDAISM) — will think it relevant. And so, before I deal with the ultimate and only solution, let me hastily deal with some *sub-solutions* that are integral parts of the greater, ultimate one. And let me begin by calling for an end to self-deception.

"Peace." They vie with each other in solutions for "peace between Jews and Arabs," and the words of the Prophet echo through the ages: "Peace, peace, but there is no peace." Indeed, there is no peace and, indeed, sadly, there will never be peace as long as the State of Israel exists as a Jewish state, and can it be anything but otherwise? Why this contempt for the Arabs? Why is it that we cannot — do not *wish* to — understand that the Arab truly sees the State of Israel, the Jewish State, as a robber state that sits on the land of "Palestine," and looks upon the Jews, Zionists, who created it, as robbers and imperialistic thieves?

"Peace"? "Coexistence"? Between Jews and Arabs? I await coexistence between *Arabs and Arabs*, in Beirut. How good and how pleasant it is to see Arab brothers living together. One can only imagine what they have in store for their cousins . . .

"Peace"? "Compromise"? Why is it that we cannot bring ourselves to want to see that, for the Arab, there is no difference between Hebron and Jaffa; between Shchem and Haifa, any town in Judea-Samaria (their "West Bank") and the now-Israeli cities of Ramle, Lydda, Acre and Nazareth? Why is it that we cannot grasp the elementary fact that a person who believes that his land has been entirely stolen from him will not eagerly seize the hand of Jewish doves, Cambridge expatriates born in South Africa, who so generously offer him a *part of it*?

"Peace"? "Compromise"? "Give up the occupied lands of 1967"? Of course, *that* is the problem. The lands of 1967. Now one begins to understand why Arabs massacred Jews in the land in 1920 and 1921 and mur-

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dered 67 Jews in one day in Hebron in 1929, and 510 Jews in the pogroms of 1936-38. Clearly all that was because of the occupied lands of 1967.

And that is surely why they turned down the U.N. Partition Plan of 1947 which would have given them a "Palestine" that included all of the "occupied lands of 1967" and a great deal more — including what is now the western Galilee and the present-day Israeli cities of Acre, Nahariya, Lydda, Ramle, Jaffa, Beersheva, Ashkelon and Ashdod.

And, in May 1967, they marched and chanted deliriously in every Arab capital, and in the "occupied lands" *which were occupied by Jordan*, for the destruction of the Israel of the Green Line. We now understand what an obstacle to peace were the occupied lands of *June 1967*. And we can now sympathize with little, moderate, Hussein, who says there will be no peace unless Israel gives up the lands that he had when he went to war.

"Peace"? "Compromise"? The "occupied lands"? What madness grips us so that we cannot understand that the "occupied lands" are minor pawns in the entire issue and that the real battle is over the fact that the Arabs of the State of Israel can never, and never will, accept the Jewish State, and they dream of its some day being "Palestine." Why? Because of the awesome and immutable truth that drives "select leaders and thinkers" mad with fear and frustration, to wit:

There is an insoluble contradiction between Zionism and its goal — a Jewish State — and Western democracy. A Jewish State, by definition, is a state that must always have a Jewish majority so that it will give the Jew the sovereignty, the independence, the self-determination, the mastery that he never had during 1900 years of brutal Exile. But Western democracy wishes nothing to do with a "Jewish" or "Arab" or any kind of predetermined, defined state. *Whoever* is the majority rules under Western democracy, and it is not relevant if one is a Jew or Arab. That is the contradiction between Zionism and Western democracy, and that is the schizophrenia that grips every Jewish leader and thinker.

Even a child can understand that not one Israeli Arab wishes to live in an Israel called "the Jewish State" any more than one Jew would enjoy living in Pat Robertson's Christian state. Not one Arab sees aught but racism in the basic Israeli Law of Return that applies to Jews only and not to Arabs. Not one Arab feels anything but coldness for his national anthem *Hatikvah*, that speaks of the "soul of the Jew yearning," and, on Israeli Independence Day, not one Israeli Arab celebrates his defeat.

*This* is the problem. The immutable contradiction between Zionism and a Jewish state on the one hand and Western democracy on the other. That is why the "occupied lands" are but minor players in the Jewish-Arab war. It is the Jewish State that is the issue and the Arab desire is to end it either with bullets or babies.

Have they the right of the latter? That is the terrible question from which all flee. Have the Arabs the right peacefully and democratically to give birth to enough babies to become the majority and democratically

vote Israel out of existence as the Jewish state? Jewish leaders and thinkers can only babble, "It will never happen" (even as the Galilee already has a majority of Arabs). They can only say, "That is why we must give up the 'occupied lands'" (and will that eventually include the Galilee with its Arab majority, and cannot even a simpleton see that the insane step of giving up Judea-Samaria-Gaza, at best, gives us another 15-20 years before the demon of demography is upon us again?) Enough.

The sub-solutions are: Put an end to illusion and to self-deception.

Understand that there will be no peace with the Arabs, no matter what the concessions are. And understand that the Arabs of Erez Yisrael, including the State of Israel, must be removed as part of an exchange of populations that began in 1948 when the first of 800,000 Jews from Arab lands came to Israel. And understand that this process must be made whether the Arabs agree or not, since Israel's existence is at stake.

And understand that the Arabs will be taken to southern Lebanon and Jordan and no one is asking the illegitimate state of Jordan (the product of the illegitimate 1922 British defiance of the League of Nations) whether it agrees or does not. We speak of Jewish survival!

And understand that the Arab states would be at war *today* with Israel if they thought they could win, even if Yossy Sarid would (Heaven forbid) be Prime Minister, and understand that the Arabs will *not* go to war for "Palestinians" as long as they are convinced that hard-nosed Israelis are at the helm, prepared to smash them. No Arab state wishes to die for the "Palestinians."

And understand, once and for all, that America, the USSR, and world Jewry are not relevant to Israel's determination to survive. The U.S. does not back Israel because it is "good," but out of self-interest, and the Jewish establishment represents so few American Jews that its pretensions would be laughable if not scandalous.

And finally. *And most importantly.* And the crux of this paper. All the above is clear, logical, truth. But all of it is unavailing except as part of the greater and ultimate solution, the only relevant one: the understanding by the Jew that his fate lies only in knowing that he is part of the Chosen People of God, bound to observe those laws and statutes given at Mount Sinai. That Jewish destiny is not a sometime thing, not a poetic phrase, but a very real, and the most fundamental, truth in Judaism and Jewry. If we walk in His statutes there will be peace and redemption. If not, there will be no peace and redemption — but, God forbid, there will be awesome tragedies and horrors, such as even we have not yet seen.

"Return, O Israel, unto the Lord." "Return unto Me, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will return unto you." If we do not understand that, we understand nothing. And we will suffer the awful consequences of our awful failure of faith and all of the solutions of all the lost leaders and thinkers will not save us.

# *End the Occupation and Show Respect for the Palestinian People*

MICHAEL LERNER

BECAUSE ISRAEL HAS THE UPPER HAND militarily and because the longer the Occupation continues the worse it will be for Israel and the fewer options it will have, it is incumbent upon Israel to make the decisive moves now to provide a solution to the problem. Saying this in no way implies that Israel has primary responsibility for the current situation. The unwarranted and often violent opposition to Zionism on the part of the Palestinians, beginning in the 1920s and continuing in many different forms (including the current uprising in the West Bank) has been the decisive factor in undermining peaceful solutions, in solidifying and intensifying the nationalistic strands of Zionism while undermining its socialist and universalist wings, and in eventually creating an Israeli population that would support policies that are immoral and self-defeating.

Yet, even acknowledging the fundamental responsibility of the Palestinians does not change the fact that, today, the vast majority of the one and a half million Palestinians living under Israeli military rule were not alive when previous generations made their rejectionist choices. Moreover, those Palestinians alive today have no mechanism for debating or choosing policies other than those imposed upon them by the PLO and other leaders of the Uprising.

Palestinians want national self-determination. It is no news to them that they would be badly treated by other Arab states — perhaps even worse than by an Israeli occupation. That, in fact, is precisely *their* point when they insist on national self-determination, not reabsorption into Jordan, as Peres-the-dove promises them! They want the same rights that Jews have demanded for themselves: freedom to live in dignity, with their own culture and their own political rights and their own policies decided upon by their own government (even a government that is undemocratic, like the one likely to be imposed by the PLO).

TIKKUN Magazine's solution: Israel must *unequivocally* and *immediately* announce its willingness to:

1. hold a plebiscite in the West Bank and Gaza, under international supervision, for the Palestinians to choose their own representatives to negotiate on their behalf for a full settlement and, regardless of who wins

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(including the PLO or any other terrorist group) Israel should announce from the start that it is willing to have face-to-face talks with those elected representatives; and

2. accept a fully demilitarized Palestinian state as the outcome of those negotiations, with the following provisos:

a. Demilitarization means that no offensive weapons can be introduced into the Palestinian state. To protect that state from invasion from Syria, Iraq, Iran or others, and to ensure that the demilitarization is secure, an international force, composed of troops from the United States, the Soviet Union and Israel will police the borders. As part of the treaty that establishes this state, the Palestinian state will agree to this arrangement in perpetuity, and will accept the following additional proviso: that, in the event that either or both other states withdraw their troops from the international force, Israel will be given full rights to patrol the border and enforce the demilitarization unilaterally.

b. As part of the treaty creating this state, the Palestinian state, in the name of the Palestinian people, must renounce all further claims to parts of what the British called Palestine. The Palestinian state shall have the borders of the pre-1967 West Bank of Jordan, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, except for the Old City, which shall be “internationalized” with regard to sovereignty but will remain under Israeli control as a “protectorate” (similar to other small areas under U.N. protectorate status).

Although this talk of a Palestinian state may seem radical, it is, in fact, far safer for Israel than any plan that envisions a return of the populated parts of the West Bank to Jordan. As part of Jordan, the Palestinians still will not have met their psychological needs for independence and self-determination and they will probably continue their struggle, eventually overthrowing Hussein and creating a dangerous Palestinian state — one with an army and with no commitment to ending its struggle for the rest of Palestine. Israel would get better and safer terms if it were to act now to create a demilitarized Palestinian state in the ways delineated above.

But, some will object, precisely *because* ours is a plan that would *prevent* a Palestinian state from being used as a launching pad for a “second stage” struggle to eliminate the State of Israel, *no Palestinians will take it*. TIKKUN’s answer: try it and see. If this objection is well founded, then, without having to give up an inch of land, Israel will *regain the moral highground*. None of us who are Shamir’s most vociferous critics would be anything but 100% supportive of an Israeli government that daily and sincerely proclaimed its willingness to create a Palestinian state but lamented that it could not do so since Palestinians were insisting on having an army. If a Jewish state were to talk in compassionate and caring terms about the Palestinian people, acknowledge its partial responsibility for having created the refugee problem in the first place, articulate its understanding of the suffering of the Palestinian people, and clearly and frequently repeat its support for national self-determination in all respects

but an army, there would be a massive shift in public opinion in America and in Israel, and it would regain the moral legitimacy and public support that twenty-one years of occupation have slowly destroyed. So, if there are no takers, the mere offer, made and repeated in a way that would be perceived as sincere, would be of tremendous political advantage for Israel at absolutely no cost.

More likely, however, this offer would precipitate an intense and bloody struggle within the Palestinian camp and, after some years, a leadership would arise that would be willing to accept these conditions, and would feel that it had enough of a mandate and enough personal security that it could renounce claims to the rest of Palestine and settle for a demilitarized state. At such a moment, Israel could obtain a real solution without a sacrifice of national security.

Focus on the *form* of negotiations (e.g., international conference vs. face-to-face) is a diversion. Israel should agree to any form that is available, but, before it does another thing, it should state now its willingness to accept the above plan, indicating in detail its minimum conditions. Once it asserts a willingness to accept this plan, it is in a much enhanced political position. Then, instead of continuing to appear to be enmeshed in endless stalling techniques — demanding this kind of conference rather than that, or this form of representation for Palestinians rather than that — Israel should cut through all the diplomatic red tape by stating and building support for its bottom line as articulated above. It should make clear that anyone who intends to impose upon it a solution that does not involve carefully policed demilitarization will get nowhere because it will simply withdraw from such a setting and refuse to participate. At the same time, given a stated willingness to create a demilitarized Palestinian state, it will have the moral credibility for withstanding all such pressure — in part, because such a position will give it unanimous support in the United States, and, along with that support, the military and economic blank check necessary to stand firm in its stance for nothing less than demilitarization.

In the unfortunate event that, after the 1988 elections, a government comes to power that is unwilling (*Likud*) or unable (a “National Unity Government” of Labor and *Likud*) to implement this plan, American Jews are going to have to use their influence to exert pressure on the Israeli government to take decisive steps towards negotiations. Indeed, such pressure will strengthen the hands of the Labor Party, and the hands of the Israeli peace movement in their own efforts to shape a peace-oriented policy. As the Los Angeles Times poll of April, 1988, has already indicated, a majority of American Jews is far more sympathetic to the *TIKKUN* position than to that of most of the more conservative organizations in American Jewish life. Those American Jews will not, and should not, support an Israeli government that continues to appear to be a major obstacle to negotiations. Genuine Zionism at that point might mean withholding

support from the actual *Likud* or Unity government, just as real patriotism for Americans during the 1960s required a refusal to support the War in Vietnam (even though American boys were being shot at by the Vietnamese).

Yet, none of us who love Israel can look forward to such a scenario with anything but deep upset and fear. To have a situation where lovers of Israel, committed Zionists, would be forced to escalate public pressure on Israel would be painful and awful. We, at *TIKKUN* Magazine, have already received numerous death threats and hundreds of abusive letters from Jews who believe that anyone criticizing current Israeli policy is automatically a “traitor” and “an enemy of the Jewish people.” The last thing we want is to escalate the level of this anger or our own potential vulnerability. But, far more important: we fear for the safety of the Jewish people itself if this kind of divisiveness becomes a more significant element in American Jewish life. Yet it would be a far greater betrayal of Israel and the Jewish people for those of us who see Israel engaged in policies that might eventually destroy our holy Jewish state if we were to temper our criticisms for the sake of personal safety or political expediency within the American Jewish world.

Israel's biggest mistake would be to rely on the advice of the Jewish professionals and establishment conservatives in this country who believe that they can deliver endless support as long as Israel is a good military ally for the Pentagon. American economic interests have more to gain by a tilt towards the Arab states (this will be called “being more even-handed”). It is only the democratic pressure that Jews and their allies are able to exert in the American political system that has restrained these economic interests in the past. But, as the occupation continues, that democratic pressure will decrease because those most committed to democratic values will become disillusioned with Israel. Those who rely on Israel's continuing military significance to the United States build their future on quicksand. In the decades ahead this country will be able to make military alliances with other Arab states, and American corporations will be pressing hard for new policies that allow them greater influence and access to the Arab markets. As the cold war decreases, fewer Americans will feel the desperate need for decisive military power in the Middle East. If, through the years ahead, Israel appears to be fundamentally stalling, procedurally dodging negotiations, or being in negotiations but not sincerely committed to a Palestinian state, and meanwhile continues to oppress Palestinians (as it inevitably must as long as it occupies) the mass base of support for Israel will dramatically decrease — and those of us who remain committed to supplying Israel with the latest military hardware to protect her from attack by Syria or other Arab states will find ourselves unable to mobilize the necessary political support to counter those who will be “evenhandedly” tilting towards the Arabs.

Some friends of Israel try to excuse Israel's current policies by talking

about “political realism” and the need to reject the kind of utopian morality that emerged when Jews were relatively powerless. Yet, such talk misses the current reality. It is not in the name of utopian morality that Israel is being criticized today throughout the world. Admittedly, some of the criticisms are outrageous — advanced by Arab, third world or Soviet-dominated societies that are among the world’s major violators of human rights. But, much of the criticism comes from Americans who give financial, political and military support to Israel because they want to support societies that advance democratic and human rights values in the world. None of the “ambiguities of power” type arguments have succeeded in convincing Americans that they should support other societies where large numbers of people are deprived of the right to vote and are governed by martial law — so why should they support Israel doing so in the West Bank? None of the “ambiguities of power” arguments have convinced Americans to support regimes that use torture and administrative detentions without trial — why should they support these techniques when used to make possible the Israeli occupation of the West Bank? The fact is that these “political realists” who caution us to not be too critical of Israeli policy are, in fact, lacking in realism themselves. They don’t actually understand that, regardless of what they say, Americans continue to use strong moral criteria in judging other countries, have rejected policies like support for the Contras once they became convinced that their money was being used to advance groups that did not share American moral and human-rights sensibilities, and will do so in regard to Israel. We have these realists in the US State Department — and they get the US involved in conflicts and suddenly find that they cannot count on the American people to support their policies. We don’t need more of these realists to defend Israeli policy — because, in their refusal to factor in the actual moral impulses of America, they become wildly unrealistic in their assessments of what policies will actually work. Using political science rhetoric to try to obscure Israel’s moral culpability will not work — and, hence, it is not only immoral, it is also not in our self-interest.

Neither are mechanical references to the Holocaust: our past suffering is no warrant for future immorality. That is precisely the point of the Torah when it warns the children of Israel *not* to reestablish in Canaan the ethical standards of Egypt. It is no use to cite what was done to us; we know that the world is rotten. The question for a Jew is always: how do you transform that world? If we want to use its rottenness as warrant for actions that most sensitive human beings recognize as fundamentally immoral, let us not, in the process, besmirch the name of people who died in the Holocaust. For millions of Jews who clung to their identity in a hostile world, the very point of doing so was to keep alive a *different* moral standard from that of the world’s oppressors.

I have talked here extensively in “self-interest” terms, leaving the



moral and religious arguments for the pages of *TIKKUN Magazine*. But there is one “self-interest” argument that is decisive: our interest in preserving the future of Judaism as a religion. If the occupation continues and if the official voices of Judaism are silent in moral confusion, the credibility of Judaism will decrease dramatically among the Jewish people themselves. If Judaism is meant to be a “witness” to God’s presence in the universe, it must be a witness that it is willing to take the risks of living in accord with Torah. Living that way is different from living a life of self-interested calculation, a life whose highest principle is self-preservation, and whose moral guides are Reinhold Niebuhr or Henry Kissinger — apologizing for evil in the name of the “complexity” of moral life, or the need for different standards to judge “moral man” and “immoral society.” There is no theme that is more clearly articulated in Torah than variants of the following: When you come into your land, do not oppress the *ger* [the stranger]. Remember that you were a *ger* in the land of Egypt! This strong Biblical command was a difficult one even for Rabbinic Judaism — and there were various attempts to abandon the *pshat* (the plain meaning of the text) and to redefine *ger* as “convert” or “resident alien.” Yet, its meaning is clear: just as we were an oppressed minority within Egypt, so we must be sure not to make anyone who is not one of us into an oppressed minority within our own land.

If this injunction is to be easily abandoned, if, the moment that the Jewish people actually have the opportunity to live in accord with Torah they violate its fundamentals, then, as the Torah makes clear, our right to the land is conditional and once again it will vomit us out: *mipnei ḥataenu galinu me-arzenu* (because of our sins we were exiled from our land). The injunctions of Torah have decisive significance and, therefore, we must insist that the only safe Israel is a morally righteous one. I have no illusions about the Palestinians. But the injunctions of Torah are not dependent on the moral purity of our neighbors. Torah does not say “Love your neighbor as yourself *if s/he* is a good and decent person,” nor does it say, “Love the stranger *if s/he* respects your national rights and is kind to you.” The most moral and righteous path is also the path that is in Israel’s best survival interests. But, if Israel is unwilling to take such a path, Judaism itself must define itself as a critic of such a state, lest, in identifying with those in power, it becomes like the Judaism of ritual and sacrifice in the First Temple period, when it engendered the anger and horror of the Prophets.

Judaism’s only hope is to keep alive the vision of a people as witness to the divine — even if that means in this period opposing what calls itself “the Jewish State.” There must be a moral, spiritual and religious content to the Jewish vision that is distinguishable from any particular empirical reality and provides a criterion for judging that reality. If, in our fervor to defend the State of Israel, we collapse this distinction, if Judaism simply becomes a fan club for any policy adopted by any government of Is-

rael, there will be few people living outside of Israel who will remain attached to such a Judaism. Yet, having a Judaism that must counterpose itself to the policies of the Jewish State is another outcome which would best be avoided. This may not be the only time in the history of the Third Commonwealth that Judaism will set us in opposition to state policies, but it is certainly the most decisive. A Jewish State that is built on the subordination of another people will never be able to sustain the loyalty of those Jews who take Judaism seriously. Though other problems will certainly emerge in the future, the first great test of the viability of a Jewish State is its ability to act in a way consistent with the best aspects of the Jewish vision. The way: end the occupation and show respect for the Palestinian people.

# *Ultimately, God Will Provide The Solution*

MILTON H. POLIN

MY AMERICAN-BORN, PH.D. SON-IN-LAW IS currently serving *in miluim*, reserve duty, in the Israel Defense Forces, in Hebron. It is the same Holy City of Hebron where our Patriarchs and Matriarchs lie buried but whose Arab residents refused for centuries to permit a Jew to get any closer to the ancestral resting places than the seventh step of the Cave of Machpelah. It is the same Hebron where, in the riots of 1929, the Arabs, in cold blood, murdered their peace-loving, defenseless Jewish neighbors, and then mutilated their bodies. It is the very same Hebron from which the Arabs wanted to flee during the Six Day War, fearing retaliation for the massacre of 1929, but who were persuaded to remain by General Moshe Dayan. The Arabs of Hebron may have been momentarily afraid in 1967, but by now their historical and hysterical hatred has returned. I pray for my son-in-law's safety.

Meanwhile, my daughter and their three children, ages five, three and one, go about their lives on their kibbuz just a stone's throw across the Green Line from two Arab villages, one of which has been involved in the recent unrest. I am concerned for my children and grandchildren.

Do we then know the problem, as the title of this symposium indicates? I think not. It is not a single problem and, therefore, does not lend itself to a simple solution. Rabbi Shem Tob ben Abraham ibn Gaon (1283-1330) wrote, in his *Migdal Oz* commentary to the Code of Maimonides, *Hilkhot Teshubah*, chapter 5: "The question of the wise is half an answer." If we really know the problem(s), then we might by this time have at least half a solution.

My problems are twofold: (1) the safety of my children and grandchildren, now, and as a result of any solutions that might be proposed and (2) whether I have the right to offer solutions when I sit in the safety and comfort of my home in America. Perhaps only my children and grandchildren, who put their lives on the line, have that right. Some might argue that they are too involved personally to find fair solutions that take into account the geopolitical realities, that only those removed from the situation can make objective assessments. We have discussed these issues both when I visit Israel and when my children come to America. We have no simple solutions. Is anyone else wiser?

This much is certain: The "Land for Peace" formula makes better reading than reality. After the Six Day War politicians insisted that Israel

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should agree to return the Golan Heights to Syria in exchange for a peace treaty. However, when they visited the area and saw the terrain with their own eyes, they agreed that Israel had no choice but to retain the Golan in order to insure the security of the valley below. Similarly, on April 13, 1988, Senator Robert Packwood of Oregon said: "I don't think Israel has to prove that they are willing to trade land for peace. I think the question really should be phrased as follows: Are the Arabs ready to promise and deliver peace for land?"

Another thing: Solutions that were dismissed as radical yesterday may have become respectable today. For example, Meir Kahane proposed expelling the Arabs from Israel and, immediately, people of good will condemned him and his idea as undemocratic. However, the idea of encouraging Arab emigration is not entirely without merit. Many Sefarim see it as a legitimate exchange of population for the one million Jews who were driven from their homes in Arab lands and then settled in Israel. Moreover, when oil prices were high, Palestinian Arabs were attracted by the lucrative wages then being paid by the oil producing states of the Persian Gulf. Finally, there is even now a substantial Muslim, hence Arab, immigration to the United States. *Time* (May 23, 1988) estimates that, in less than thirty years, "U.S. Muslims are expected to surpass Jews in number and . . . become the country's second largest religious community, after Christians."

When a more moderate Knesset member recently endorsed the idea of a population exchange, he, too, was criticized. However, apparently no one even questioned Congressman James Scheuer when he wrote, in an Op Ed column (*New York Times*, April 23, 1988), "The United States must insist that the refugees be resettled permanently in the Arab countries."

Of course there are solutions. Israel should have crushed the Arab uprising early with whatever force was necessary. It may not be too late to do that even now. Better that Israel should receive bad reviews in the world press than that Arabs — refugees, residents, and neighbors — should think Israel is weak and indecisive. And as for Jewish ethics, the Torah decreed, "If one come to slay thee, forestall by slaying him" (*Sanhedrin* 72a).

Yes, the Government of Israel should listen respectfully to any and all opinions on the subject, from whatever source they come. But Israel should act only in terms of its own short and long range security needs and interests. The short range may even be the more important, for "what time will do, intelligence cannot."

Finally, a believing Jew recognizes a modern miracle in the rebirth of the State of Israel. The ingathering of the exiles and the scientific and economic achievements are, likewise, beyond the natural course of human events. There is a God in the world, and He will not forsake His people. Ultimately, He will provide the solution.

# *The Inescapable Consequences of Demography*

HENRY SIEGMAN

THE ARAB-ISRAEL CONFLICT HAS UNDERGONE a fundamental change that has incalculable consequences for Israel as well as for Israel's friends abroad, although the nature of these consequences for Israel and for Diaspora Jewry are of a different order.

Since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, and certainly since the Six Day War in 1967, the main question facing Israeli policymakers seemed to be: when would a hostile and unforgiving Arab world reconcile itself to Israel's legitimacy and permanence. Until it would, Israel would sit comfortably astride Greater Israel (since 1967) and wait for that proverbial telephone call from Hussein in Jordan or from other Arab capitals. If the call did not come, so much the better, for that would mean that, sooner or later, the world would reconcile itself to the fact that the West Bank and Gaza are permanently in Israel's possession.

This somewhat simplified but essentially correct description of the situation that prevailed until recently has undergone profound change, for reasons having little to do with politics, and even less with ideology. It is demography that has altered, irreversibly, the political landscape of the Arab-Israel conflict.

Simply stated, the problem is that *today* — not twenty or forty years hence — there are 590,000 Jewish children in Israel up to the age of eight. There are 630,000 Arab children in that same age category. In twelve years, there will be 1.3 million Jewish children in Israel under the age of 18, as against 1.4 million Arab children of that age. The inescapable implication of these numbers is that it is only a matter of time before there will be more Arabs than Jews in the territories now held by Israel. These demographic realities have two quite distinct consequences. The first has to do with the character of Israeli society, the other with Israeli security — its physical survival. With regard to the former, if Israel were to hold on permanently to the territories, it will have to decide either to enfranchise its Arab population and cease being a Jewish State, or permanently deny them the franchise and cease being a democratic State.

The demographic projections have equally transforming consequences for the question of security. The threat to Israel is increasingly not from hostile Arab armies outside of its borders, but from a growing

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Palestinian population inside its borders. Given the demographics, the *intifada* of these past nine months is but an augury of things to come.

In relation to this changed character of the threat to Israel's survival, greater territory and enlarged borders offer no additional security. To the contrary. It is precisely the additional territories and the hostile populations that they contain which create the security threat. Furthermore, a sustained civil revolt of Palestinians within the territories may, in time, force Egypt to abrogate its peace treaty with Israel and, in the event of a war, join the other Arab armies. Ze'ev Schiff, Israel's leading military correspondent, wrote recently (in response to Binyamin Netanyahu's dire warning that, if Israel were to withdraw from the territories it now holds, it would become impossible to land or take off at Ben Gurion Airport because of the threat of Palestinian terrorists with Stinger missiles), "We can promise Netanyahu that a perpetuation of the present situation in the territories will invite even greater dangers — not only to Ben Gurion Airport, and involving much more sophisticated missiles than Stingers."

The upshot of all of this for Israeli policy is that sitting and waiting for a phone call from the Arab world — seemingly so attractive a policy for nearly forty years — is now entirely untenable and irrelevant. The *status quo* itself has now become the single greatest threat to Israel's security. Indeed, it is no longer unusual to hear leading Palestinian nationalists argue that *their* best strategy is to sit tight, because the demographics are far more likely to undo Israel than are Arab armies or the PLO. Therefore, the challenge to Israel is to devise new initiatives that will change the *status quo* and prevent predictable consequences that may pose deadly dangers to its security.

These same developments have had equally drastic consequences — albeit of a quite different nature — for American Jews. As long as the problem was hostility and obduracy, and Israel's security was best served by Israel sitting tight until the Arab world came to its senses, the obvious task of American Jewry was to make certain that our own government provided Israel with military and diplomatic support that would enable Israel to outlast the Arabs. The unity of the American Jewish community in support of that goal became the primary, if not the sole, political preoccupation of American Jewish leadership.

Now, however, a new situation has been created, for the goal is no longer outlasting the Arabs. At least half of Israel — half its government, half its people and considerably more than half its military experts — has concluded that to do nothing may invite disaster. Israel's security and survival, according to this view, now depend not on maintaining the *status quo* but on changing it. Maintaining American Jewish unity in support of the *status quo* has thus become a politically irrelevant goal insofar as Israel's security and survival are concerned — if those who see the *status quo* as Israel's deadliest enemy are correct.

American Jewry has thus entered a new and terribly unsettling phase in which the old slogans have become irrelevant. Unity is hardly an end in itself. Inevitably, American Jews who care passionately about Israel's survival must deal with the substance of the issues, and cannot satisfy themselves with "maintaining Jewish unity" if that unity serves to perpetuate the *status quo*. If the *status quo* were, in fact, to lead to Israel's undoing, it would be scant comfort for American Jews to point out that at least we preserved Jewish unity!

There are some who maintain that, despite these changes, American Jews — for a variety of reasons — have no moral right to intervene in questions that affect Israel's security. In real life, however, Jews who care passionately about Israel will seek to influence what happens there precisely on issues that affect its existence, because their *kishkes* (guts) will not permit them not to. They will not stop to ask whether there exists an ideological justification for their intervention; their deep caring is, for them, sufficient cause.

Despite the overheated rhetoric of those who consider Diaspora interventionism as "collaboration with Israel's enemies," I have no doubt that this behavior obtains on both sides of the ideological divide. If, for example, Israel's Labor Party were to become dominant in Israel and there were some imminent prospect of a return of major parts of the West Bank and of the dismantling of settlements, Israeli right-wingers would not hesitate for even a fraction of a moment to seek Diaspora Jewry's intervention — including that of U.S. Congressmen and Senators, if they thought that would work — to prevent the return of the territories and the dismantling of the settlements. They would do so despite their insistence today that to invoke such outside intervention constitutes outrageous interference in the internal affairs of Israel. And I would understand and accept their actions in those circumstances, for they would be acting out of a genuine conviction that they are preventing Israel's dissolution. What I do *not* accept is their unwillingness to grant to those who disagree with them as to where Israel's real security lies the Jewish legitimacy that they arrogantly claim *only* for themselves.

American Jews no longer enjoy the luxury that they once had of avoiding policy debates in Israel which might distract from their central preoccupation with the maintenance of a united political front in the United States. Given the new realities in Israel, it could hardly be otherwise. If Israelis are deeply divided over what policies serve their country's well-being and, indeed, its very survival, those divisions will inevitably be reflected in the life of American Jewry as well. If they were not, that could be only because American Jews do not care enough. Obviously, they do, and we will have to learn to manage the divisive consequences of that caring — in Israel and in the Diaspora — in a manner that best advances the cause that all sides in this complicated situation seek to serve. How that is done is not at all clear, but surely it begins with respecting the integrity of the motives of those with whom we are in disagreement.



# ***“And He Shall Rule Over Thee”***

**BEREL DOV LERNER**

MICHAEL L. ROSENZWEIG’S ARTICLE, “A Helper Equal to Him” (JUDAISM, Summer, 1986) took Jewish biblical exegesis an important step forward toward making the story of Adam and Eve palatable to the modern reader. He demonstrated that the Hebrew phrase, “*ezer kenegdo*,” used to designate Eve’s role vis-à-vis Adam, may be plausibly translated as “a helper equal to him” where the word “helper” does not carry its usual connotation of inequality.

Nevertheless, Rosenzweig’s article fails to address the much more problematic passage:

Unto the woman He said, “I will greatly multiply the pain of thy childbearing; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and yet thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee” (Genesis 3:16).

Proper treatment of this verse requires more than philological analysis. It calls for a reinterpretation, within the broader context of the first book of Genesis, of the punishments meted out to the snake, to Adam and to Eve.

My interpretation of the list of punishments is rooted in the simple observation that each aspect of life that was made difficult by God’s curses has been referred to earlier in the text. For example, the snake is told (3:14) “and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.” According to an earlier passage, the snake would have eaten plants: “And every beast of the earth and to every bird of the air and to everything that creeps on the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for food” (1:30). So, too, Eve is cursed with “in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children” (3:16) when previously she had been blessed with fecundity: “be fruitful and multiply” (1:28). Adam, cursed with hard work: “in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread” (3:19), at the outset had been placed in the Garden of Eden “to till it and to keep it” (2:15).

In each, a basic activity of living, i.e., eating, reproducing, working, is first mentioned in a positive context and then distorted and made difficult by God’s curse. Food, described as God-given, becomes dust for the snake. The blessing of human fecundity becomes a source of pain and danger. Work, the divine purpose of man’s creation, is transformed into a bitter struggle for survival.

Although God’s curses distort the activities of eating, reproduction and work, Jewish Scripture retains their basic positive value. Thus,

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throughout Scripture, children are counted as a much sought-after blessing. Unlike the well-documented disparaging attitudes that are voiced in classical Greek and Roman sources, Jewish Scripture and tradition accord honor to productive labor. Thus, the role of God's curses is somewhat paradoxical. The activities which are the objects of God's curses had been formerly declared by God to be valuable in themselves. They then remain valuable even when deformed by God.

Having dealt with the three activities tainted by God's curses, I turn now to the two basic *relationships* affected by the divine punishments.

The first is mankind's relationship with the snake, which can be taken as man's relationship with Nature in general. As originally depicted, man's relationship with Nature is that of straightforward human sovereignty:

replenish the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth (1:28).

Following the commission of the sin, the clear dominion of man breaks down and is replaced by continuous struggle:

And I will put enmity between thee [the snake] and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel (3:15).

The earth, which man was to “replenish and subdue,” will become “cursed . . . for thy sake” (3:17). Originally designated to rule Nature, mankind must forever do battle with it.

I come now to the central problem addressed in this essay: the second relationship affected by God's curses, that between man and woman. We must apply to this case the principles developed in the examination of the punishments of the snake and of Adam. As in those cases, here, too, we are dealing with a valuable aspect of life which has been made distorted. Indeed, the value and original nature of the man/woman relationship is clearly depicted in Genesis. When first presented, men and women are on quite egalitarian terms. The genders are mentioned almost as an afterthought: “So God created Mankind in His own image, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them” (1:27). The blessings that they received, including dominion over the earth and the charge to subdue it, are all addressed in the plural, indicating that both man and woman would share them.

The detailed account of woman's creation, in chapter two of Genesis, might be construed as indicating feminine inferiority (e.g., Paul's declaration: “A woman ought not to speak, because Adam was formed first and she afterwards” (Timothy 2:13). Yet, a careful reading of Genesis will reveal an insistence upon the importance of Adam and Eve's relationship and her equality within that relationship.

Throughout the creation narrative we read of God declaring things good. "God saw the light, that it was good" (1:4). So, too, the separation of water and land was good (1:9) as was the creation of vegetation (1:12), the heavenly bodies (1:18), creatures of the seas and the air (1:21) and of the land (1:23). All were declared good. The first chapter of Genesis ends with the verse: "And God saw everything that he had made and, behold, it was very good" (1:31). After such a persistent affirmation of creation's goodness, any hint of imperfection in God's world takes on a special salience. All the more so when God, Himself, bluntly states the problem: "It is not good that the man should be alone" (2:18).

The solution to the problem is obvious: "I will make a help to match him" (2:18). (Or, in Rosenzweig's words: "a helper equal to him.") Strangely, the biblical narrative does not proceed directly with Eve's creation, but, rather, tells of how God created specimens of all of the living creatures and brought them before Adam so that he might name them.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this interruption in the narrative becomes clear when we read its concluding verse:

And man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for the man there was not found a help to match him [a helper equal to him] (2:20).

Man was in need of the companionship of an equal. By presenting him with all of the animals of Nature, God was telling Adam that here were all of the beings that he was meant to rule, yet none of these creatures which were subservient to him could dispell his loneliness. Finally, when presented with Eve, Adam declares with relief: "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh" (2:23). He has finally discovered the partner with whom he can share the privileges and purpose given to him by God.

As in the case of man's relationship to Nature, man's relationship to woman is also damaged by God's punishment. We read: "Unto the woman he said . . . he [man] shall rule over you." The proper order of things has been completely overturned. Nature, which was created to serve mankind, rebels against man's authority. Woman, who was to be man's equal, becomes subservient to man.

Thus, Genesis instructs us that, while initially posited in ideal terms, four central aspects of human existence (i.e., reproduction, work, the relationship of mankind to Nature and the relationship between man and woman) were negatively altered and distorted as a result of the sin of Adam and Eve.

What is the meaning of their punishment for us? Some anti-feminists would like to count "and he shall rule over thee" as the 614th commandment of the Torah. The implausibility of such an interpretation should now be doubly clear. Firstly, the verse "and he shall rule over thee" de-

1. The interpretation of this section largely follows U. Cassuto, *From Adam to Noah* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1986) pp. 83-90 (in Hebrew).

scribes a punishment, a state of affairs which is, by definition, undesirable. Secondly, the ideal man/woman relationship, as fully explicated earlier in the text, is a condition of shared privileges and responsibilities between equals. Thirdly, there is no indication given that any human being is called upon to enforce God's punishments.

Although God may have made work difficult for man, it is no human's job to insure that weeds choke my vegetable garden. The Torah does not depict these punishments as a penance to which we must dutifully submit, but, rather, as objective difficulties against which we must struggle. Although God has caused childbirth to be painful and dangerous, the Torah has nothing but praise for the midwives, Shifra and Puah, who served the Jewish women in Egypt (Exodus 1:15-21). Later Jewish tradition also supports the efforts of those who could try to lighten the burden of God's curses. Rashi explains that Noah eased the toils of his generation by inventing agricultural implements (see his comments in 5:29).

In sum, I believe that it has been demonstrated that the Torah does not offer the verse “and he shall rule over thee” as a recipe for marital bliss, but, rather, as a critical depiction of an evil of human existence of no less consequence than the ravages of Nature or the constant struggle to make ends meet. If we extrapolate from the attitudes towards God's curses as they are evidenced in Jewish Scripture and tradition, we can only conclude that the struggle against the social inequality of women is as legitimate as the struggle to wrest material sustenance from intractable Nature.

# *Halakhah and Homosexuality: A Reappraisal*

ROBERT KIRSCHNER

## I

CONTEMPORARY JEWISH DISCUSSION OF homosexuality shares one premise in common: that halakhah and homosexuality are irreconcilable. Even those at opposite ends of the argument concur in this verdict. In an influential essay first published in 1974, Norman Lamm, a prominent Orthodox rabbi, concluded that halakhah “allows for no compromise in its abhorrence” of homosexuality.<sup>1</sup> At the other extreme, Janet Marder, a Reform rabbi, recently reached the same conclusion: “I do study halakhic pronouncements about homosexuality; I do try to understand the rationale behind them. But I am now quite willing to jettison them, without apology, in constructing my own version of Judaism.”<sup>2</sup>

For those writing from a halakhic perspective, the decisive if meager sources are routinely cited. A homosexual act between two consenting adult males is an abomination (Lev. 18:22) punishable by death (Lev. 20:13). The prohibition of homosexuality applies universally (B. *Sanh.* 58a, *Mishneh Torah Melakhim* 9:5-6). Two bachelors are permitted to sleep beneath the same blanket (M. *Qid.* 4:4) only because Jews are not suspected of homosexuality (B. *Qid.* 82a). One is warned to avoid seclusion with another male (*Shulhan Arukh Even ha-Ezer* 24), although such precautions may be unwarranted (*Bayit Hadaash, Tur Even ha-Ezer* 24). Homosexuality thwarts the procreation of human beings for which human sexuality is intended (*Sefer ha-Hinnukh* 209) and destroys family life (*Asheri, Ned.* 51a). Female homosexuality is also forbidden (*Mishneh Torah Issurei Biah* 21:8), although it is not regarded with equal severity (B. *Yev.* 76a).

Those who argue for the acceptance of homosexuality have pursued either of two approaches to the halakhah. One seeks relief from the law's

1. Norman Lamm, “Judaism and the Modern Attitude to Homosexuality,” *Encyclopedia Judaica Year Book* (Jerusalem, 1974), p. 204.

2. Janet R. Marder, “The Impact of Beth Chayim Chadashim on My Spiritual Growth,” *Journal of Reform Judaism* 32 (Winter 1985): 35.

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severity by invoking halakhic categories of mitigation.<sup>3</sup> Homosexuality qualifies as duress (*ones*) if it is defined as inherently pathological. The second approach repudiates the halakhah in favor of a transcendent moral standard. Judaism's teaching of love, dignity and commitment in human relationships is understood to supersede halakhic strictures concerning homosexuality.<sup>4</sup>

Each of these arguments, whether for condemnation, mitigation, or validation of homosexuality, assumes that the halakhah on the subject is monolithic and final. Each argument assumes that the character of halakhah as a whole is fixed, that the halakhic universe is closed, that halakhah cannot change. A leading exponent of this view, J. David Bleich, insists that "Jewish law does not change . . . I must either accept this principle or reject the halakhic process in its entirety."<sup>5</sup> By this definition of halakhah, the law given in time now stands above time. What was once rooted in circumstance is now beyond circumstance. Neither the social context nor the acquisition of new knowledge can influence halakhah. Jewish law is immutable.

What is surprising in the contemporary Jewish discussion of homosexuality is that even liberal Jews have acquiesced in this fundamentalist definition of halakhah. Despite the liberal conviction that halakhah must admit to innovation and respond to new developments, an argument for changing the halakhah with respect to homosexuality has not been advanced. To plead for leniency as a form of tolerance is not to change the halakhah but merely to mitigate it. Instead, liberal Jews must appreciate halakhah as a phenomenon rather than as a fossil. Halakhah, like any living thing, must be capable of change and growth. It cannot be immune to the people whose life it guides nor to the times in which they live.

David Novak has described the dynamic of change that inheres in the halahic system.<sup>6</sup> He refers to the debate between R. Ishmael and R. Akiba (cf. B. *BM* 115b; B. *Sot.* 37b; *Sifra be-har*, ed. Weiss 105a) concerning the priority of details versus generalizations. Akiba's view, which prevails, is that general principles are deduced from specifics. Novak points out that, in halakhic discourse, simple deduction from a general principle is unreliable "because the principle itself is not an *a priori* ground of deduction. The principle is clearly a *posteriori*, that is, empirical. Here is where an un-

3. See, e.g., Hershel J. Matt, "Sin, Crime, Sickness or Alternative Life Style: A Jewish Approach to Homosexuality," *JUDAISM* 27:1 (1978): 13-24. In an unpublished, privately circulated responsum concerning the establishment of synagogues for homosexuals, Eugene Mihaly characterizes homosexuality as a category of duress that "merits all the sympathy, consideration and kindness that the halakha extends to the victim."

4. E.g., Marder, *Op. cit.*; cf. Ellen M. Umansky, "Jewish Attitudes Towards Homosexuality: A Review of Contemporary Sources," *Reconstructionist* 51:2 (Oct./Nov. 1985): 9-15.

5. J. David Bleich, "Halakhah as an Absolute," *JUDAISM* 29:1 (Winter 1980): 31, 32.

6. David Novak, *Halakhah in a Theological Dimension*, Brown Judaic Studies 68 (Chico, CA, 1985), pp. 1-10.

predictable, historically conditioned factor in the halakhic process must be acknowledged . . . ”<sup>7</sup>

To demonstrate that selective and circumstantial factors have influenced halakhic principles, Novak cites the permission granted by Rashi (R. Solomon b. Isaac, 1040-1105, France) and his grandson Rabbenu Tam (Jacob b. Meir Tam, 1100-1171, France) for women to recite the benediction before performing a positive and time-bound commandment (*Teshuvot Rashi* 68; *Tosafot Qid.* 31a). Previously such a benediction was forbidden (*berakhah le-vattalah*). Obviously, the halakhah was affected by the changing perception of the woman's role in twelfth century Jewish life.

While granting the authority of revelation, rabbinic tradition also insists on the power of interpretation. The authority to interpret the law is expressly delegated to the human intellect (c.f. B. *BM* 59b, 86a). The halakhah is entrusted to the scholars of each generation (B. *RH* 25b). While they must approach this task with great care and humility, they must determine the law in each case according to their own understanding (cf. B. *Sanh.* 6b, B. *Nid.* 20b, B. *BB* 131a) and the prevailing circumstances of their time. To reduce halakhah to antiquarianism is to deprive it of all vitality and us of all autonomy. The Talmud (B. *Qid.* 54a) long ago maintained that the Torah was given not to angels but to human beings.

## II

A halakhic reappraisal of homosexuality depends upon two premises: first, that halakhah is capable of change; and second, that modern rabbinic authority recognizes the limits of ancient rabbinic knowledge. These two premises are hardly radical. They already inform much of rabbinic responsa literature.

An emblematic and highly pertinent example is the halakhic definition of the *heresh*, or deaf-mute. In the Talmud the *heresh* is always classed with the minor and the imbecile as mentally incompetent. These three are not held responsible for their conduct because they are believed to lack sufficient intelligence to perform various ritual and civic acts. According to ancient, medieval, and some modern halakhic authorities, deaf-mutes cannot serve as witnesses, cannot dispose of property, cannot be counted in a *minyan*, cannot affect marriage or divorce, etc. The rabbis assumed that those who could not hear or speak could not possibly know what they were doing, or else lacked the independence of will necessary for legal responsibility.

Were the halakhah immune to change or to the evidence of new data, the case of the *heresh* would be closed. As in the case of the homosexual, the halakhic verdict is stated categorically. Only in the last century have

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.



some rabbinic authorities come to understand that people who cannot hear or speak are often fully capable of intellection and communication. The anomaly of automatically classifying such people as mentally deficient was recognized by R. Abraham Samuel Benjamin Sofer (1815-1871, Hungary).<sup>8</sup> On a visit to the Vienna Institute for the Deaf and Dumb, R. Sofer observed the accomplishments of the pupils there and expressed doubt that the halakhic exclusion of deaf-mutes could be applied to them. In his collection of responsa published in the 1960s, the renowned authority, R. Isaac ha-Levi Herzog (1888-1959, Ireland, Israel) concluded that a deaf-mute who has learned to read and write shall be considered a person of normal intelligence.<sup>9</sup> He argues that proof from early authorities can now be disregarded because in those times techniques for teaching deaf people did not exist. In light of modern advances in knowledge, the *heresh* "has exited from the category of the mentally deficient. At the very least, (the matter is) in doubt."

There are dissenting views. Numerous halakhic authorities continue to accept and enforce the ancient definition of the deaf-mute as a mental incompetent, notwithstanding modern evidence to the contrary. Nonetheless, even J. David Bleich, whose claim that Jewish law does not change is mentioned above, acknowledges that

in light of the degree of education attained even by true deaf-mutes in contemporary society, it is doubtful that they are to be considered examples of the *heresh* described in rabbinic references. Hence they should be encouraged, and indeed required, to participate fully in Jewish religious life, including performance of all ritual obligations as well as in Torah study.<sup>10</sup>

In the case of the *heresh*, the advance of empirical knowledge is admitted to the realm of halakhic discourse. Judgments once regarded as absolute are modified in light of new information. In Novak's phrase, halakhah is self-contained but not self-sufficient. Not even halakhah is as comprehensive as reality itself. An unexpected new datum may collide with old assumptions. But unless the halakhah encounters the truth as we know it, it cannot hope to guide life as we live it.

Homosexuality is a contemporary case in point. Whatever the question at issue — whether two men may be secluded; whether they may share a blanket; whether a warm climate encourages homosexual acts; whether female homosexuality is punishable — ancient and medieval halakhic authorities assume that homosexuality is a matter of volition. A person engages in it willfully and with wrongful intent. Homosexuality is punishable because it is defined as intentional. This judgment has persisted to our own day. A recent article in the *Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society*<sup>11</sup> describes homosexuality as "an activity entered into vo-

8. *Teshuvot Shevet Sofer* by R. Simḥa Bunem Sofer (1842-1906), *Even ha-Ezer* 21.

9. *Teshuvot Heikhal Yizḥaq*, *Even ha-Ezer* 2:47.

10. J. David Bleich, *Contemporary Halakhic Problems*, v. 2, (New York, 1983), p. 375.

11. Barry Freundel, "Judaism and Homosexuality," *Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society*

litionally by individuals, who may be psychologically healthy, which is maladaptive and inappropriate.” The word “homosexual,” the author argues, is “not a noun that identifies and categorizes the individual but an adjective that describes his activity.” Thus “homosexual” describes what a person does, not what a person is. If one refrains from homosexual behavior, one ceases to be a homosexual. It is simply a matter of choice.

In his discussion of homosexual “types,” Norman Lamm also perceives a degree of intention that is particularly reprehensible. He writes of “opportunistic” and even “ideological” homosexuality. On the other hand, he concedes a basis for leniency in those cases of homosexual behavior that qualify as inherently pathological, “especially where dysfunction appears in other aspects of the personality.”<sup>12</sup> In such cases, however, there is concern that subsequent homosexual acts will be committed in the absence of psychotic compulsion and in full knowledge of halakhic prohibitions.<sup>13</sup> Thus, even the more lenient halakhic model of homosexuality is founded on the ancient assumption of willed and willing departure from normal sexual behavior.

But as in the case of the *heresh*, the erstwhile halakhic understanding of homosexuality is now antiquated. Modern empirical evidence simply cannot sustain it. The study of human sexuality in our time has vastly expanded and drastically altered assumptions as recent as Freud’s, let alone as ancient as the Talmud’s. It is true that the results of scientific inquiry are often tentative and just as often weighted with unspoken values and assumptions. Moreover, some contemporary research on homosexuality fails to meet even modest scientific standards, and certain theories are unsupported by the most rudimentary data. Nonetheless the frontiers of knowledge have moved far beyond the ancient field of vision. Like the *heresh*, the homosexual must be viewed in light of what we know now.

### III

Sex, the distinction between man and woman, is clearly stated on the birth certificate. It is determined by the physician attending the birth upon examination of the physical organs of reproduction. It is assumed that these organs represent certain internal structures and generative instincts.

Sexual identity, however, is far more complicated. It is conditioned not only by neonate physiology but by social and psychological characteristics that are culturally associated with males and females. Physical appearance, personality, mannerisms, speech, and other attributes are perceived as feminine or masculine. These attributes affect parental, sibling,

11 (Spring 1986): 70-87. The following quotations are found on p. 80 and p. 73 respectively.

12. Norman Lamm, *Op. cit.*, p. 22.

13. Moshe Halevi Spero, *Judaism and Psychology: Halakhic Perspectives* (New York, 1980), pp. 166-167.

and peer reactions to a child and may be a significant factor in the gender role assigned to the child by others as well as in the child's ability to identify with his or her own sex. An unathletic boy or unattractive girl may be forced into inverted gender roles by the reactions of others and by the subsequent distortion of their own self-concepts. One's basic conviction of being female or male does not always correspond to one's biological sex, nor is it necessarily contingent upon it.

Homosexuality, the preferential erotic attraction to a member of the same sex, is as old as human memory. It is portrayed in prehistoric art and in hieroglyphs of ancient cultures. According to a classic study,<sup>14</sup> 64% of 76 societies that were surveyed approved of some form of male homosexual behavior. In no society, however, is homosexuality the predominant practice. In some societies, homosexual behavior is punished by penalties ranging from ostracism to death. It is estimated that the incidence of exclusive homosexual behavior in Western culture ranges from 5 to 10% for adult males and 3 to 5% for adult females.<sup>15</sup> Despite the trend toward increasing sexual permissiveness in our times, the incidence of homosexual behavior has remained constant.<sup>16</sup>

Figures produced by Alfred Kinsey and his associates<sup>17</sup> with respect to homosexuality have been disputed, but they remain, to this day, the largest body of empirical information on human sexual diversity ever compiled and the most reliable for statistically significant populations. Unlike predecessors such as Freud and Havelock Ellis, Kinsey and his colleagues conducted direct interviews with ordinary people and developed statistical case-studies. Seeking to determine the balance between heterosexual and homosexual behavior, they discovered not a dichotomy but a continuum. In a sampling of 12,000 males, it was revealed that at least 37% had had some homosexual experience since adolescence. In light of previous studies suggesting that homosexuals were relatively rare, the Kinsey group reported:

We ourselves were totally unprepared to find such incidence data when this research was originally undertaken. Over a period of several years we were repeatedly assailed with doubts as to whether we were getting a fair cross section of the total population or whether a selection for cases was biasing the results. It has been our experience, however, that each new group into which we have gone provided substantially the same data.<sup>18</sup>

According to the Kinsey report, sexual orientation fluctuates over a lifetime. 50% of the male population is exclusively heterosexual throughout adulthood; 4% is exclusively homosexual; and 46% have both heter-

14. C.S. Ford and F.A. Beach, *Patterns of Sexual Behavior* (New York, 1951).

15. Judd Marmor, "Overview: The Multiple Roots of Sexual Behavior," *Homosexual Behavior*, ed. J. Marmor (New York, 1980), p. 7.

16. Arno Karlen, "Homosexuality in History," in Marmor, *Homosexual Behavior*, p. 96.

17. Alfred C. Kinsey et al, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Philadelphia, 1948); idem, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (Philadelphia, 1953).

18. Kinsey et al, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, pp. 623-624.

osexual and homosexual inclinations in the course of their adult lives. Among women the incidence of homosexuality is from one-third to one-half less than among men.<sup>19</sup> In sum, as sexual conduct or desire, homosexuality is not limited to a small proportion of adults. Rather, it appears to be an integral feature of human sexuality.

Many theories of the etiology of homosexuality have been proposed, although none have been proven. Several hypotheses assume biological causes. Hormones, chromosomes, and electroencephalograms (EEGs) have been studied for signs of differences between heterosexuals and homosexuals. Some studies suggest that homosexuals suffer from brain abnormalities; others that prenatal hormones affect subsequent sexual orientation. However, there is no present evidence that homosexuals of any degree are chromosomally discrepant from heterosexuals. The claim that biological factors constitute the decisive influence on sexual identity and behavior remains unproven.

Other theories of homosexuality focus on the constellation of behavioral variables beginning in early childhood and culminating in late adolescence with recognition of one's homosexuality and involvement in homosexual behavior. The behavioral paradigm suggests that a child is born with an undifferentiated sexual drive that is channeled in one direction or another by social interactions. Sexual orientation is learned much as language is learned. The obvious difficulty with this theory is that heterosexuals often have the same life experiences and psychodynamic conflicts as homosexuals. Freud, for instance, attributed the development of homosexuality to a pathogenic family background, defined as a hostile, detached father and a seductive, domineering mother. But his theory fails to account for the fact that such families produce heterosexual children as well.

Neither biological nor behavioral determinism is sufficient to explain the etiology of homosexuality. The consensus of modern research is that a combination of innate and acquired traits determines sexual orientation. Psychosexual differentiation is a process in which brain and social stimulus interact. Both genetic and environmental factors are involved in measures yet to be calculated with certainty. There appears to be no single route to homosexual outcome.<sup>20</sup>

What emerges from modern research of human sexuality is a far different picture than the ancient rabbis imagined. Halakhah assumes that sexual orientation is dichotomous and permanent. But modern research has shown that sexual reality is variable. It changes with individuals, genders, and societies. Neither homosexuality nor heterosexuality is a mo-

19. See Kinsey et al, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*.

20. David S. Sanders, "A Psychotherapeutic Approach to Homosexual Men," in Marmor, *Homosexual Behavior*, p. 345.

nolithic category. According to I. Singer,<sup>21</sup> human sexuality is not uniform but pluralistic:

By pluralism I meant the refusal to assume in advance that nature prescribes a unitary model for male and female response, that there is only one norm which could indicate how all men or women must behave in order to function properly, that there is a unique mode of consummation that satisfies male or female sexuality, that there is a universal condition which constitutes or structures sexual response in all people on all occasions, or that there is a single instinct or biological system basic to human sexuality.

From this understanding of the complexity and multiplicity of human sexual response, homosexuality appears to be an expression of diversity rather than of perversity. It is one example of the immense flexibility of human sexual behavior. Because the halakhic view stresses the importance of procreation, it is cast in a unified imagery of polar attraction. But halakhah itself concedes that procreation is not the only goal of human sexuality.<sup>22</sup> The consensus of current scientific literature is that homosexuality is not a perversion but, rather, in its multiple manifestations, a state of sexual being.

#### IV

As demonstrated in the case of the *heresh*, halakhah has the capacity to recognize and to reckon with advances in empirical knowledge. Realizing after many centuries that people of impaired hearing and speech are not necessarily retarded, halakhic authorities have called for a revision of the ancient equation of deaf-mute and imbecile. In our own times, new understanding of human sexual diversity also requires the reconsideration of an ancient judgment. The biblical context associated with sexual relations between males — idolatry, cultic prostitution — no longer obtains. The few rabbinic references to male or female homosexual behavior indicate, by their lack of both content and number, only minimal awareness of homosexual phenomena. Today we know more.

It is true that much of the new data and hypotheses are inconclusive. It is also true that scientific disciplines are neither absolute nor unerring. Yet if the halakhah cannot address the new borders of human knowledge, it risks its claim both to relevance and to truth.

Within the revealed Jewish tradition there exists a dynamic by which the previous limits of human apprehension are acknowledged. The argument advanced in this essay seeks to speak out of that tradition. It appeals to the integrity of the process by which truth is recognized and injustice is rectified. It calls for an end to the Jewish devaluation and deg-

21. I. Singer, *The Goals of Human Sexuality* (London, 1973), pp. 15-16.

22. As shown by David M. Feldman in *Marital Relations, Birth Control, and Abortion in Jewish Law* (New York, 1975), the halakhic paradigm of sexuality provides for "two primary mitzvot: that of procreation and that of marital relations independent thereof." See his discussion, pp. 60-105.

radation of homosexuals. It suggests also that, as in the case of the *heresh*, the phenomenon is less of a problem than is the stigma attached to it.

In a traditional rabbinic responsum, when the issue at hand cannot be resolved due to its inherent complexity or to uncertain evidence, the author concludes with the Hebrew phrase *zarikh iyyun*, "It needs (further) investigation." At the very least, the subject of homosexuality is in need of further study. Until the data are conclusive, halakhic authorities can properly concede a basis for doubt that suspends a verdict.<sup>23</sup> For those who are already persuaded by the empirical evidence of sexual diversity, the Jewish imperative is clear: to rescind the ancient denunciation of homosexuals and to recognize that all persons, in their unique sexual being, are the work of God's hands and the bearers of God's image.

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23. To those who argue that halakhah cannot suspend an explicit biblical verdict such as Lev. 20:13, we need only point to such well-known examples as the ordeal of jealousy for the suspected adulteress (Num. 5:11-31) or the stoning of the rebellious son (Deut. 21:18-21), each of which is effectively nullified by the rabbis; see B. *Sot.* 47a-b, B. *Sanh.* 71a.

# A Meditation on Maoz Zur

ISMAR SCHORSCH

FAMILY HISTORY HAS GRACED ME WITH A special affection for the holiday of Hanukkah. Fifty years ago, back in the fall of 1938, it literally marked a moment of redemption. As the last rabbi of Hanover, my father, along with thousands of other German Jews, was interned by the Nazis on the still unimaginable night of *Kristallnacht*. Several weeks later a visa to England, secured through the good offices of Joseph H. Hertz, the Chief Rabbi of the British Empire, managed to effect his release, and, like our ancestors in Egypt, we left Germany in haste, by plane, on the first day of Hanukkah. My father was fond of recounting that in that fateful year we lit the first candle in Germany and the second in England. I had just turned three a month before and our dramatic flight was to become my only tangible memory of Germany.

The conjunction of Hanukkah with our personal escape from Nazi tyranny prompted my father later on to enliven our celebration of the festival with a lusty rendition of the traditional hymn, *Maoz Zur*. While the practice among American Jews generally is to sing only the first stanza, and maybe the fifth, we sang all five, skipping only the sixth and final stanza. The poem's theme of redemption seemed to offer a poignant comment on our family's experience. Thus, in time, I developed an existential interest in the poem, spiced by the curious omission of its final stanza. When questioned, my father would simply declare that the stanza was a later and inferior addition.

The purpose of this meditation on *Maoz Zur* is to reclaim it for the liturgical enrichment of Hanukkah. The sudden popularity of Hanukkah, spurred by Zionist achievement and American need, has outgrown the traditional liturgical garb, predicated on a different valence for the festival. In this bind, we are ill-served by dispensing with a poetic ornament that actually accords with our historical and religious sensibilities. Nor should we be satisfied by an act of tokenism — the retention of a single stanza mistranslated to mask its real meaning.

In its present form, *Maoz Zur* consists of six stanzas. Since the days of Leopold Zunz, the first five have been ascribed to an unknown German poet named Mordecai, who lived sometime before the middle of the thirteenth century and whose name survives as an acrostic formed by the first letter of each stanza. Each stanza of four lines is laced with a complex and varied rhyming pattern, while each line contains two equal halves of six long syllables. Though the use of the quantitative metrical principle is a

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trademark of medieval Sefardic poets writing under Arabic influence, the well-known lilting melody by which the hymn is traditionally sung, echoing the strains of a fifteenth-century German folksong, seems to underscore the Ashkenazic provenance of the original text. Congruently, the poem is absent from the Sefardic rite.

One is tempted, therefore, to argue that *Maoz Zur* conveys the collective anguish of a community stunned by three Crusades in the span of a single century and threatened with a deteriorating political situation. But, for medieval Jews, *Galut* (exile) was a state of mind even during interludes of tranquility, and the pervasive *angst* of its religious poetry was often generic rather than specific. If *Maoz Zur* does, in fact, bear witness to the darkening horizon of thirteenth-century German Jewry, its testimony is delivered with disarming restraint.

The setting of the original poem of five stanzas is somewhat indeterminate. The speaker is clearly the national voice of Israel addressing God with customary immediacy. But when? My preference is to date the moment of dialogue not long after the reconquest of the Temple. *Maoz Zur* is a song of thanksgiving for the recurring and unfailing instances of divine compassion for Israel. The rescue from "Greek" tyranny triggers a recollection of earlier cases when God's intervention redirects the course of Jewish history. In stanzas two through four the poet recalls, in chronological order, the experience of national degradation in Egypt, Babylonia, and Persia, with the slide into oblivion reversed each time only through a dramatic exhibition of divine power. The redemption at the time of the Hasmoneans, described in the fifth stanza, is seen retrospectively to be yet another confirmation of God's guardianship of Israel which guarantees its survival. And soon thereafter, in stanza one, the voice of Israel celebrates the destruction of its arrogant foe and the resumption of its cultic link to eternity. The introductory stanza thus anticipates the mood of exultation that follows the climactic act of redemption emphasized by the poem.

But the imperfect tense employed by Mordecai in that opening stanza injects a touch of fertile ambiguity. The suffering of Israel was only momentarily interrupted by Hasmonean victory. The fate of Israel in the poet's own age continues to hang in the balance. The fluidity of time suggested by what might grammatically be construed as a continuous present (a form well known in the Bible) points to past as well as to future exultation. Collective memory posits the assurance of ultimate messianic salvation.

What may, indeed, tenuously connect *Maoz Zur* to the age of the Crusades is its conception of the Jewish experience in terms of persecution. A deepening sense of exile seems to be constricting what is worth remembering to episodes of national humiliation. While a full-fledged "lachrymose" theory of Jewish history would have to await the more worldly Sefardic historians of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the chronicles

and poetry of twelfth- and thirteenth-century Ashkenazic liturgists surely testify to the oppressive reality of mounting insecurity. A compression of the ancient history of Israel to four salient crises has all the earmarks of an inchoate worldview born in dark times. Yet, the mood of *Maoz Zur* is not funereal, or else its traditional melody would be grotesquely inappropriate. Each crisis is recalled to emphasize its well-timed resolution and to visualize the blessing of God's enduring protection. The suffering of Israel, whatever its cause, is always relieved by an act of salvation.

With the exposition of the five authentic verses of *Maoz Zur*, our analysis might easily be ended, adequate and unexceptional. But what has come to intrigue me, in fact, is the addition of the sixth stanza, an unabashed messianic plea for divine retribution upon Israel's Christian oppressors, often left untranslated by the modern prayerbooks that deign to print it. To probe the reasons for this poetic codicil is not only to clarify the meaning of the original poem by Mordecai, but also to confront the religious doubts evoked by the defiant autonomy of history.

Internal evidence like the acrostic is not the only basis for decoding the lateness of the sixth stanza. External evidence is provided by a German halakhist at the end of the seventeenth century who relates having found several different versions of a sixth stanza affixed to the original text of *Maoz Zur*. Obliging, he cites all three, including one penned by none other than Moses Isserlis, the renowned Polish rabbinic authority of the sixteenth century. However, the version which eventually gained currency appeared anonymously, perhaps because the acrostic of its first three words spelled the bracing command, *hazak* — "be strong." According to our source, all three versions strove for the same effect — to update and complete *Maoz Zur* by reference to the fourth and final overlord of Israel's endless subjugation.<sup>1</sup>

Classic rabbinic messianism, based on the apocalypse of Daniel, had plotted the plight of Israel on a grid of four empires — Babylon, Persia-Media, Greece, and Rome. Inevitably, medieval Jewish history had imposed modifications on the identity of the Imperial players but the schematic framework held firm, and the Hebrew cognomen, *Edom*, came to encompass medieval Christendom as well as ancient Rome. From the number of additions to *Maoz Zur* that were in circulation by the seventeenth century, it is obvious that Jews who had endured the recurring expulsions from German principalities in the late Middle Ages and had witnessed the colossal breakup of the Papal empire itself suddenly invested the old prayer with fresh messianic fervor. The lack of any allusion to the fourth kingdom and its downfall was now felt to be intolerable.

The language of the anonymous stanza that was finally accepted bristles with particular hostility. Besides a blunt entreaty for revenge against "the wicked kingdom," it dares to allude to the internecine strug-

1. Yehiel Michel Epstein, *Kizur Shnei Luhot ha-Brit* (reprinted N.Y., 1982), p. 247.

gle fracturing the unity of the Christian world: “*dehei admon be-zel zalmon* — vanquish Christianity (*admon*, a variant of *edom*) in the very shadow of the cross” (*zalmon*, a variant of *zelem* and here standing either for the Papacy or the heartland of Christianity).<sup>2</sup> Understandably, somewhat later, the stanza was softened by universalizing the line: “*mehei fesha ve-gam resha* — erase all sin and transgression.” Left untouched, though, is the rousing messianic finale — “and send forth the seven shepherds,” a passage from *Micah* (5:4) which the rabbis took to mean the reappearance of a phalanx of seven biblical figures led by David (*Succah*, 52b).

The various additions proffered thus confirm my reading of Mordecai’s poem as a song of thanksgiving set back in the days of the Maccabees. The authors behind them also understood the opening stanza as primarily a celebration of Maccabean reconquest and rededication. Ultimate messianic redemption had to await the travails of yet a fourth kingdom — Rome. The vision of *Maoz Zur* did not clearly extend beyond the third — that of the “Greeks,” rendering it slightly sterile for the impatient victims of the most formidable of all the kingdoms.

But the addition of the sixth stanza altered subtly the theological message of the entire poem. Mordecai had found consolation in the constancy of divine concern; the author of the codicil implied displeasure at the brevity of the result. Evidently, not all instances of divine pathos were of equal efficacy. The messianic temper questioned the long-term value of earlier redemptive acts. What prompted this criticism was not only experience but also exegesis. In the final analysis, to comprehend fully the issue on which the completed poem turns, we must return to its literary source. For *Maoz Zur* is a commentary on an exquisite piece of midrashic thought.

That midrash is to be found on Psalm 31, the biblical quarry from which Mordecai had hewn the opening phrase of his poem — “O mighty Rock of my salvation.” The Psalm itself is the entreaty of a tried and beleaguered man who has always experienced his trust in God to be mercifully rewarded. The second verse aptly captures the mood throughout: “I seek refuge in You, O Lord; may I never be disappointed; as You are righteous, rescue me.” The midrash seizes on the problematic word “never” (*leolam*) to ponder the efficacy of God’s protection. The word, as well as the whole Psalm, seems to imply that, once bestowed, God’s salvation will never lapse. The person so blessed will never again know shame and discomfiture. Indeed, Isaiah confirmed that very proposition when he declaimed: “Israel has won through the Lord triumph everlasting. You shall not be shamed or disgraced in all the ages to come!” (45:17)

After this prologue, the midrash weaves a dialogue between Israel

2. The theory that *admon* might be a reference to Frederick Barbarossa, who was a redhead and died in the Third Crusade, is so specific as to be utterly implausible. It also fails to account for why the stanza is not cited until the end of the seventeenth century. For the theory, see *Sefer ha-Moadim* (Tel Aviv, 1957), vol. V, pp. 180-182.

and God in order to confront the harsh divergence between history and theology. The people ask God for immediate redemption, because their state of subjugation is forever accompanied by degradation and disgrace. "Redeem us and we shall be rid of degradation. Why? Because Your redemption is everlasting." And they buttress their case with the verse from Isaiah. But God rejects the underlying assumption. "I have already redeemed you in the past and I will be your redeemer again in days to come." He, too, cites scriptural evidence of past intervention and continued engagement.

Nevertheless, Israel remains unmollified. "To be sure, You have already redeemed us through Moses, through Joshua, and through some judges and kings. But we have once again been subjugated and endure degradation as if we had never been redeemed."

To which God responds that, in fact, those were cases of redemption effected by mere mortals, beings of flesh and blood. "Your leaders were men, alive one day and buried the next. It is for this reason that your redemption was only redemption for an hour. But in days to come I, who live and endure forever, shall redeem you Myself. I shall redeem you with an eternal redemption, as it is said: 'Israel has won through the Lord triumph everlasting.' Consequently, 'You shall not be shamed or disgraced in all ages to come!'"<sup>3</sup>

In short, the sordidness of history need not confute the purity of theology. The courage to distinguish between relief effected by men, no matter how exalted and inspired, and redemption through unmediated divine interjection affords a fragile reconciliation between what we see and what we believe. God's fleeting presence is insufficient to bring history to its rightful end, though it has left traces of enduring and sustaining brilliance.

I am convinced that the final stanza of *Maoz Zur* rests on this profound and sober midrash. Centuries after Mordecai, another Ashkenazic Jew, stirred by the tremors and aftershocks of the Reformation, appended his messianic codicil. Prior achievements of national redemption, from the Babylonian exile to Syrian oppression, were of limited duration because mediated by men. The passing references, in earlier stanzas, to Zerubbabel, Mordecai, and the Hasmoneans suggest as much. In contrast, the fourth kingdom could be overcome only by God Himself. Hence the form of direct address — "Bare Your holy arm," which, given its original redemptive use by Isaiah (52:10), is redolent with messianic urgency. Short of such direct intervention, every respite attained by human hands, even with divine aid, is flawed and perishable.<sup>4</sup>

Taken together, the two strata of *Maoz Zur* blend into a liturgical reflection on Jewish history — the precariousness of minority existence, the

3. *Midrash Tehillim*, ed. by Solomon Buber (reprinted Jerusalem, 1977), p. 119.

4. On the general topic of Jewish messianism during the Reformation era, see Hayim Hillel Ben-Sasson, *The Reformation in Contemporary Jewish Eyes* (Jerusalem, 1970).

reality of divine concern, the consolation of collective memory, and the rarity of true messianism. Paradoxically, the final stanza, with all of its messianic fervor, accentuates the modern emphasis on the human role in the Hanukkah story. The hunger for irreversible redemption is not to be satisfied by human counterfeit. Messianism, properly understood, leads to political restraint. To my mind, no lesson is more vital to a generation like ours which is so prone to misread the signs of recent Jewish history.

# *The Symbolic Uses of North*

DAVID E. FASS

## ORIGINATORS OF RELIGIOUS LITERATURE

are true creative artists in the manner of sculptors, painters, and the like. On their palettes are found, not colors, but words and ideas that are combined and intertwined to produce meaning, drawing us from the realm of the everyday towards a world of the created and the Creator. Thus we speak of religious meaning as largely symbolic, for religious symbols, like symbols in general, are words, objects, signs, that refer to, or point at, something beyond themselves.<sup>1</sup>

The term “north” in Jewish tradition is one such symbol. Its possible range of meaning, the original shade on the palette, is incredibly wide and powerful, owing to the ancient and widespread belief that the north was the mountainous abode of the Divine for the Greeks<sup>2</sup> and the pagan Semites<sup>3</sup> as well as for the Israelites.<sup>4</sup> The Hebrew word itself, *Zafon*, is derived from a root stem that means, “to hide, or treasure up.”<sup>5</sup>

The powers of the universe, then, were seen as stored up in a hidden treasury, traditionally located on or above a mountain somewhere in the north. Such powers can be made manifest in any number of ways. They can be harsh or merciful. They can bring scarcity or abundance. They can create or destroy. They can be quiescent or loosed upon humankind for good or ill.

In Jewish sources we can, indeed, find just such a period of quiescence in which north was simply a geographical term. Then, in response to tragically real geo-political events, north became a powerful symbol of the storehouse of evil. Finally, as the trauma of the destruction of Israel and Judah subsided, but still the long night of the Diaspora wore on, north was turned into a symbol of the redemptive, messianic longings of our people. In tracing this unfolding process we can come to know not

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1. See, for example, Alvin J. Reines, “Polydoxy and the Equivocal Service”, in *Gates of Understanding*, edited by Lawrence A. Hoffman (New York, U.A.H.C. for the C.C.A.R., 1977), p. 99.

2. Mt. Olympus, home of Zeus and the rest of the Greek Pantheon, is an actual place, located in the north of Greece.

3. Cyrus H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965), p. 475, par. 2185. I am grateful to Dr. Robert Gordis for drawing my attention to this reference.

4. Cf. Job 26:7, Psalms 48:3, and Isaiah 14:13.

5. Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (London, 1907), p. 860.

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only the various symbolic meanings of north, but can also shed some light on the symbol-formation process itself.

Tracking the term *Zafon* in all its forms through the *Tanakh*<sup>6</sup> we find that, in the Torah, north is used consistently in a non-symbolic sense. The very first occurrence, in Genesis 13:14, is typical. In *Parshat Lekh Lekha*, Abram's retainers and those of his nephew Lot engage in a dispute over grazing rights. The two relatives agree to go their separate ways rather than remain in the same area. The text continues,

And the Lord said to Abram, after Lot parted from him, "Raise your eyes and look out from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west ..." (Gen. 13:14).<sup>7</sup>

This pattern begins to change in Isaiah. Here we find the first uses of the term north in conjunction with value-laden events and concepts. The Babylonian invaders are chided for boasting:

I will set my throne  
I will sit in the mount of assembly  
On the summit of *Zafon* ... (Isa. 14:14).

Isaiah warns the Philistians, "Quake, all Philistia, for a stout one is coming from the north ..." (Isa. 14:31), referring to the retribution that God will bring upon Israel's enemies from that direction.

We may speculate that the impetus for such usages came from the events of Isaiah's lifetime: the destruction of the northern Kingdom by Assyria in 721 B.C.E. and the siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib in 701. Both took place during Isaiah's prophetic career, that ranged from 740 to about 700.<sup>8</sup>

The symbol-formation process continues quite strongly in the writings of Jeremiah. Here we find every single reference to north, from the first chapter to the penultimate, associated with powerfully evocative words, concepts, and events. It is hardly speculation to conclude that Jeremiah's usage of north was strongly influenced by the seminal events that he witnessed from roughly 630 to 580 B.C.E.:<sup>9</sup> the decline of Assyria and the rise of Babylonia, the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem and the beginnings of the Babylonian Exile.

Jeremiah's usage of north presents three basic themes. First and foremost, the north is the source of great evil and destruction. Even the decline of Assyria gave way only to another destroyer from the north, Ba-

6. Solomon Mandelkern, *Konkordentsiya Latnach* (Tel Aviv: Schocken Publishing House, Ltd., 1969), pp. 1002-3.

7. *Tanakh, A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures According to the Traditional Hebrew Text* (Philadelphia, Pa., 1985). All further English quotations from the Bible, unless otherwise noted, are from the same source and are listed in the body of the text by chapter and verse.

8. Sheldon H. Blank, *Prophetic Faith in Isaiah* (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press), 1967, p. 7.

9. Sheldon H. Blank, *Jeremiah, Man and Prophet* (Cincinnati, Ohio: Hebrew Union College Press, 1961), p. 232.



bylonia. Typical is the assertion (Jer. 1:14) that "From the north shall disaster break loose." Second, the people will be returned to their homeland from their exile in the north if they repent.<sup>10</sup> Third, it is also from the north that God will visit retribution upon Israel and Judah's northern enemies.<sup>11</sup>

Although these references are largely connected to specific historical events and locations, we do find indications of a more fully symbolic use of north in the later chapters. There we are presented with the northern destroyers, severed from any known geographical locale, and referred to simply as coming from "the northland . . . from the remotest part of the earth" (Jer. 50:41), and presented metaphorically as "waters rising from the north . . . a raging torrent, they shall flood the land and its creatures . . ." (Jer. 47:2).

It is when we turn to the writings of Ezekiel that we find the concept of north transformed into a full-blown symbol. In the very first chapter the prophet declares:

. . . the heavens opened and I saw visions of God . . . I looked, and lo, a stormy wind came sweeping out of the north . . . (Ezek. 1:1, 4).

The greatest number of references to north in any book of the *Tanakh* are found in Ezekiel.<sup>12</sup> As the prophet who was most intimately connected with the Babylonian Exile this, indeed, is what might have been expected. Yet, his uses of north are now almost exclusively symbolic in that they occur in visions of the heavens and of an earth of the far future.

What does north mean for Ezekiel? It is a source of corruption and evil, the area of origin of the pagan worship that Israel adopted and which led to the Exile in the first place. At "the Penimith Gate that faces north . . . was the site of the infuriating image that provokes fury" (Ezek. 8:3). At "the entrance of the north gate of the House of the Lord . . . sat the women bewailing Tammuz . . ." (Ezek. 8:14).

The north is fraught with danger even for the righteous, for Ezekiel tends to view it as the source of a strict, retributive Divine Justice. God tells him: "I will draw my sword from its sheath, and will wipe out from you both the righteous and the wicked . . . all flesh from south to north . . ." (Ezek. 21:9).

Strict justice is not the only one of God's attributes to come from the north. Mercy also comes from that direction. In one vision Ezekiel sees six beings "each bearing his weapons of destruction" (Ezek. 9:1) who "entered by way of the upper gate that faces north . . ." (Ezek. 9:2). But with them was another being whose function it was to put a mark on the fore-

10. See, for example, Jer. 3:12,18.

11. See, for example, Jer. 25:26; 50:3.

12. Mandelkern (*Op. cit.*) lists 42 uses in Ezekiel. This is nearly double that of Jeremiah, which contains the second most frequent use of north with 25 uses.

heads of all those who protested the introduction of idolatrous worship in order to spare them punishment at the hands of the other six.

Like Jeremiah, Ezekiel also sees retribution coming upon Israel's enemies from the north. His hopes for vengeance are found in the messianic vision in Chapters 38 and 39. In the distant future, after the ingathering of the exiles (Ezek. 38:8) Gog of the land of Magog will come with a great horde from his home in the farthest north (Ezek. 38:6, 15; 39:2) to make war on the people of Israel. Amid terrible earthquake, overthrown mountains, toppling cliffs, pestilence, bloodshed, torrential rain, hailstorms and sulfurous fire (Ezek. 38:19-22), the northern destroyers will meet their end. They will be given as food to carrion birds and beasts of the field (Ezek. 39:4), their weapons will be used as fuel for the fires of the inhabitants of Israel for seven years (Ezek. 39:12, 14). Thus, God will balance the scales and the people will rest secure.

The north is also the source of the ultimate retributive force that will usher in the New Jerusalem and the rebuilt Temple. It is the direction from which God's very presence will enter the world in the messianic future. Amid simple geographic references to the north gate, north part of the Temple precinct, the north entrance to the priests' chambers, the northern boundaries and the northern tribes of the restored Temple, city, and land, Ezekiel is shown the inner parts of the Temple, "and the chamber that faces north is for the priests who perform the duties of the altar — they are the descendants of Zadok, who alone of the descendants of Levi may approach the Lord to minister to Him" (Ezek. 40:46). Why are the most important officiants, those with exclusive rights to the altar, found in the chamber that faces north? Because it is from that direction that God's presence enters the Temple and, presumably, will do so again in the future. Ezekiel declares that God's messenger "... led me, by way of the north gate, to the front of the Temple. I looked and lo! the presence of the Lord filled the Temple of the Lord and I fell upon my face" (Ezek. 44:4). Instead of images of Tammuz and other idolatrous fetishes in the north part of the Temple, it is now God's glory that is found there. Although in the past God had entered by the east gate, henceforth that is to remain shut; no one shall enter it (Ezek. 44:1-2). It is now the north that is to remain open to God's presence.

For Ezekiel, then, north is a symbol of the heavenly direction from which God's awesome power comes that sweeps away the idolatrous corruption that descends from the earthly northland. From the north, God brings not only destruction for idolators, but also mercy for those who remain faithful, as well as the ingathering of the exiles. In the far future God will bring Gog and hordes of northern destroyers to cleanse the land of all corruption and then Israel, Jerusalem and the Temple will be restored. In the restored Temple, the descendants of Zadok will minister at the sacred altar and the Temple gate will remain open to God's coming, not on the east, but on the north.

Ezekiel's writings serve, of course, as a primary source for the Jewish mystical tradition. His use and development of north is very much in keeping with the rest of his visionary approach. In what measure is his work in the realm of symbolism the result of a sensitive imagination longing for a world that had been rudely snatched away? We can only speculate, but we can say, with regard to the symbolic use of north, that it was the Babylonian Exile and Ezekiel's role in interpreting it that was the boundary-point. Before that, north was a specific term. After that, it was fully available for symbolic use.

Zechariah, for example, most of whose work clusters around the period of the end of the Babylonian Exile, sees "four chariots . . . coming out from between the two mountains . . ." (Zech. 6:1). When the prophet asks what they are, his angelic guide informs him:

Those are the four winds of heaven coming out after presenting themselves to the Lord of all the earth. The one with the black horses is going out to the region of the north . . . Take good note! Those that went out to the region of the north have done my<sup>13</sup> pleasure in the region of the north (Zech. 6:5,6,8).

Zechariah presents north, not only as full-blown symbol of transformation associated with the winds of change that do God's bidding, but he adds another element as well. The north wind is represented by black horses. The north is the land of darkness, yet the darkness is not necessarily evil. It may simply represent the obscurity of God's designs to our human sight. Here the task of the dark horses is most positive, presumably to help prepare the way for the return of the exiles and for the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

A striking image of the power of the dark north wind for good is also found in Job, whose friend, Elihu, counsels him that

. . . one cannot see the sun though it be bright in the heavens, until the wind comes and clears them [of clouds]. By the north wind the golden rays emerge; the splendor of God is awesome (Job 37:22).

Although Job (and we, too) may find fault with Elihu's sentiments, the image stands: the north wind may come and clear away whatever prevents human beings from perceiving God's awesome splendor.

The rest of the references to north in the *Tanakh* do not add substantially to our understanding, but it is in the post-Biblical literature that the symbolic use of north blooms more fully. Interestingly enough, for all its magnitude as the source of pillage and destruction, north is presented more and more as a positive symbol.

In the encyclopedic notes to his masterwork, *The Legends of the Jews*, Ginzberg asserts that early sources locate Paradise not in the east, but in the north-west.<sup>14</sup> Although

13. Or, reading with emendation, "the Lord's" pleasure.

14. Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia, Pa.: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1968), vol. V, pp. 13-14, note 33.

[T]o the north are the supplies of hell-fire, of snow, hail, smoke, ice, darkness, and windstorms, and in that vicinity sojourn all sorts of devils, demons, and malign spirits. Their dwelling place is a great stretch of land . . . beyond lies hell,<sup>15</sup>

midrashim derived from early *Baraita* literature view the arrangement of the furniture in the Tabernacle as evocative of the location of Paradise in the north. The table for the show-bread is found in the north part of the sanctuary (Ex. 40:22-4), "to indicate the delights of which the pious would partake in Paradise, which lies to the north . . .". The table also functions to help keep evil, found in the north, from coming upon Israel.<sup>16</sup>

Talmudic references to north build upon many of the same symbolic associations. In *Yevamot*, a discussion of circumcisions digresses into an analysis of why the Israelites did not perform them during the forty years in the wilderness. One reason is that during that entire time the north wind did not blow. Without that wind, the south wind prevailed, making it too hot and, presumably, too dangerous, to perform *milah*. The lack of the north wind is first seen as a sign of God's displeasure with Israel, probably over the golden calf incident (Rashi) and/or the sin of the spies (*Tosafot*). A second reason for the absence of the north wind is that it might blow away the protecting "clouds of glory" that surrounded the camp. yet, during the forty years, "there was not a day on which the north wind did not blow at the midnight hour" as a reminder of its role in protecting the Israelites on the night when all the first-born sons of the Egyptians had been slain.<sup>17</sup>

The north wind is thus seen as a positive sign of God's grace. Without it, crucial rituals such as circumcision could not be performed, nor, by extension, could the *Pesah* sacrifice be offered. In line with the idea in Job 37:22, it is the north wind that blows away the clouds of glory that came between God and Israel. This is probably the reason that for a short time each day, at midnight, the north wind did blow, presumably to open a direct channel, if even for a moment, between heaven and earth.

The positive and necessary effects of the north wind are found in *Gittin*, where it becomes a barrier against evil:

R. Hanan b. Raba said in the name of Rav: "Four winds blow every day and the north wind blows with all of them, for were it not so the world would not be able to exist for a moment. The south wind is the most violent of all, and were it not that a *Ben Nez* [an angel?] keeps it back, it would devastate the whole world."<sup>18</sup>

15. Ibid., vol. I, p. 12. See also the visions of Enoch, who is shown the location of hell in the northern region of the third heaven (vol. I, p. 132).

16. Ibid., vol. III, p. 160-161; vol VI, pp. 65-6, notes 337 and 340.

17. *Yev.* 71b (bottom) - 72a.

18. *Git.*, 31b.

Evil may come from the north, but it is also from the north that God's messenger comes to keep the world's evils at bay. Since there is always evil to be found in all quadrants of the earthly realm, God's protection from the north cannot falter or we would be overwhelmed.

In another Talmudic passage, the question is raised as to where noxious sites like carrion dumps, graves, and tanyards may be placed in relation to inhabited areas.<sup>19</sup> There, R. Judah connects north with a concept not seen as yet: as a source of the world's material well-being. He claims that the north wind promotes commerce, making "the gold flow."<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, Rashi explains that the north wind dries up the available produce in the fields, producing scarcity which requires people to pay money for food.<sup>21</sup> But given what we have seen above, the explanation could just as well be that the north wind does the opposite: it moderates the overly-hot south wind, helping the crops to grow, thus providing greater income to the farmers. The north becomes so firmly identified with wealth that the Talmud advises one who wishes to become rich to face in that direction during prayer.<sup>22</sup>

The same rather lengthy discussion introduces another new symbolic element in the use of north: as a challenge. The text cites R. Eliezer's comment that the world is like an exedra, a four-sided figure open on the north side.<sup>23</sup> A fuller version is found in the third chapter of *Pirkei d'Rebbe Eliezer*:

From the quarter facing north darkness goeth forth into the world. The quarter facing north He created, but He did not complete it, for He said, anyone who says: I am a god, let him come and complete this quarter which I have left incomplete and all will know that he is a god.<sup>24</sup>

If the north quadrant is open, it is in that direction that the "unfinished business" of the world's history is to be found. For Eliezer, north is a storehouse, primarily of evil, as before, and of darkness. The darkness that enters the world via the unfinished north quadrant is immediately associated with those who challenge God's supremacy. By implication, for those who accept God's hegemony, the unfinished north represents a positive challenge: working alongside God to complete it, to defeat the dark forces that still plague us.

With north firmly established as symbolic, both midrash and commentaries are able to focus on non-symbolic uses in the *Tanakh* and interpret them symbolically. *Midrash Tehillim* cites Lamentations 2:15 to the effect that Jerusalem "was called perfect in Beauty, Joy of All the Earth"

19. *B.B.*, 25a.

20. *Ibid.*

21. Rashi on *B.B.* 25a.

22. *B.B.*, 25b.

23. *B.B.* 25a-b.

24. *Pirke De Rabbi Eliezer*, trans. by Gerald Friedlander (New York: Hermon Press, 1970), p. 17.

(Lam. 2:25). The reason for such joy was that a person who sinned could go up to Jerusalem, make an offering there, and the sin would be forgiven.<sup>25</sup>

Evidence is deduced through a literal translation of *Yarketai zafon* in Ps. 48:3 as “sides of the north.” Is Mount Zion, the subject of this phrase, indeed in the north? It is actually in the south. The reference to north, claims the midrash, refers to the fact that offerings for the expiation of sin were made on the north side of the altar (Lev. 1:11).<sup>26</sup> The joy of Zion and Jerusalem is its ability to help transform the darkness of sin into the light of faith.

Rashi explores the issue of north as a point of orientation. He contends that the “back of the Tabernacle,” mentioned in Exodus 26:12, is the west side because the entrance was on the east, or front. North and south, then, are the sides of the Tabernacle, in the right (south) and left (north) directions.<sup>27</sup> In his analysis of Ex. 27:13, which cites the width of the enclosure of the Tabernacle on the east side with the (seemingly) redundant phrase *Keidmah mizrahah*, the purpose of this phrase, says Rashi, is to indicate that the east is the front, not only of the Tabernacle, but of the world. The west is, therefore, the back of the world<sup>28</sup> and, by implication, north and south are the sides.<sup>29</sup>

It is possible that Rashi was aware of the newly invented navigational compass, a sliver of magnetic iron floating on a piece of straw or cork in a bowl of water, that came into use sometime between 1000 and 1100 C.E.<sup>30</sup> Yet he certainly does not use north as the prime point of orientation. That honor has always been reserved for east, the direction not primarily of the rising sun, but of Israel and Jerusalem. The orientation point for all European Jews of the Diaspora, the direction in which the Jewish worshipper always faced, was east. North remained the side, the left side, the left hand of darkness, the side of punishment and destruction, as well as possible mercy and potential transformation.

It is in the *Zohar*, that magnificent font of Jewish mysticism, that we find the capstone of the development of north as a Jewish symbol. Building upon previous sources, the *Zohar*, too, evokes north as a source of strict justice tempered by mercy, and as the source of retribution upon Israel's enemies.<sup>31</sup> The smoke of the evening sacrifices drifts directly to the north, where the demons feed upon it and are thus held at bay.<sup>32</sup>

25. *Midrash Tehillim*, Ps. 48, #2.

26. *Ibid.*

27. Rashi on Ex. 26:12.

28. Rashi on Ex. 27:13.

29. The same thought is found in Rashi's commentary on Num 34:15, Job 23:8 and *B.B.* 25a.

30. *McGraw Hill Encyclopedia of Science*, Sixth Edition (New York: McGraw Hill Publishing Company, 1987), vol. 10, p. 284.

31. *The Zohar*, trans. by Harry Sperling and Maurice Simon, Second Edition (London: Soncino Press, 1984), Vol. III, p. 245 (II, 81b in the original).

32. *Ibid.*, pp. 370-1 (II, 130a).

What of the time after the destruction of the Temple? It is prayer that now becomes even more powerful than sacrifice:

At midnight, when the north wind awakens, it beats against all the abodes of those malevolent spirits, cracking in twain a gigantic mighty rock, the stronghold of the "other side," and rushes about everywhere, both above and below; and all [130b] the evil demons return to their places, for their power is then broken and they have no influence.<sup>33</sup>

Not only can sacrifice hold evil at bay, but even the power of human prayer can break the evil power of the demons and end their influence. When we do pray, "then the Holy One, blessed be He, enters the Garden of Eden to have joyous fellowship with the righteous . . ."<sup>34</sup> No longer are we passive recipients of the northern evils and the pangs of exile. Through our own efforts we can pave the way for God to re-enter Eden and for paradise to come again upon the earth.

The final victory of the north wind is, of course, a messianic association. At midnight, this same north wind strikes the harp of David, from whose house the Messiah will come. Whoever wakes to its music in the night, to study Torah, hastens that coming and is called "a companion of the Holy One."<sup>35</sup>

The outcome of our messianic longing is by no means certain. The power of north to transform the world is very much dependent on how we humans respond. For the exiled Jew of the Diaspora, the wind that blew at midnight in the wilderness to create a clear path to God's presence may yet blow again. Even in the middle of the darkness of dispersion the rooster, harbinger of the light and the new day to come, sounds a clarion call to action. From the north now comes an urging to wakefulness and redemptive transformation. Woe to those who do not heed the call.<sup>36</sup> But those who do listen, who rise at midnight for study and prayer, can help bring an end to exile.

33. Ibid., p. 372 (II, 130a-b).

34. Ibid.

35. *Op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 369 (III, 21b-22a).

36. Ibid., p. 374, (III, 23 a-b).



# *To Know What They Knew*

JACOB SLOAN

"I must emerge from this dabble-dabble in religious subject matter; I must shake my whole self and learn what I do and do not believe, or else eschew such themes altogether. I am ashamed of this lukewarm imitative dilettante religiosity. Pfui!"

— Thornton Wilder

I DO NOT KNOW ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE, BUT the hardest thing for me is to find out what I really think and really believe. I am rarely quite certain, for much of what I say is merely intended to redress an imbalance in what other people say; if the aye is too affirmative or the nay too negative, I insert a maybe. So I have always subscribed to the theory that one learns what one thinks by working it out, in my case in writing. I do not care for careful preliminary, detailed outlines, agreeing with W.H. Auden's tart old lady who, when asked her opinion of something or other, grumpily replied: "How shall I know what I think until I have said it?"

I go on a similar assumption, that somehow my unconscious will direct my wandering fingers across my typewriter to the Promised Land of truth within me.

Which brings us to God, for it is He whom I almost inevitably discover somewhere toward the end of whatever it is I am writing — poem, article, review, even footnote to someone else's writing. I am always amazed to find God standing there, dominating the landscape, like Mount Sinai in the wilderness. Readers have complained about His sudden appearance, and I have agreed with them. For, consciously, I cannot accept as fact the fundamental tenets of faith: soul, immortality, miracle, grace, God's personal intervention in history. Nor, as Jew, do I regard myself as one of His chosen people, with a special role to play in His world. In short, I see no divine meaning or purpose in existence.

Yet, God remains my obsession, my King Charles' head, as it were. I mean no disrespect by this comparison and do not wish to be sacrilegious. In fact, I have on occasion rebuked secular Jews who would peremptorily remove God from His position in the center of Jewish life.

It is not true, I have remonstrated, that Jewishness is only a way of life: Jewish friends, Jewish food, Jewish jokes, Jewish idioms, Jewish

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stress on intelligence and education, a special Jewish relationship with Israel . . . even characteristic Jewish neuroses and a shared wariness about anti-Semitism. Nor is Jewishness only the observance of Jewish rituals, celebration of Jewish holidays, synagogue attendance. These are the outward marks of a common religion, whose source is the family and community. But they are not the core of that religion, its sanction, so to speak — which is honest faith.

I have argued with considerable fervor that when you leave God out of Jewishness, you are disconnecting from the source of power that sustained our fathers in the past — and disparaging them. For our fathers, God was not just a manner of speaking. They actually, truly believed in His presence and efficacy in their world. When they recited the eighteen benedictions three times a day, they meant them: God *was* King of the Universe, and *did* respond to prayer.

Do we smile at their naivete? But they were by no means simple-minded sentimentalists, fiddlers on a Broadway roof. They were as worldly as we, and they included in their midst the best minds of their generations — scientists and financiers and politicians and, of course, writers. Nor can we detach ourselves from them on the grounds of our modern progress. As T.S. Eliot put it with his usual conciseness:

Someone has said: "The dead writers are remote from us because we know so much more than they did." Precisely, and they are that which we know.

I have argued for many years that before discarding God we should try to find out what it was our fathers knew about Him. Our approach to faith should be in the spirit in which Wordsworth urged us to approach poetry: in a willing suspension of disbelief. Religionists in whom I have confided have immediately responded that such a suspension could not be temporary — it would be the first step to permanent faith. They may be right, though that has not so far happened with me. Psychiatrically-minded persons have warned me to the contrary: to cultivate noncommitment is to invite neurosis. They, too, may be right. For my part, I have no aspirations to be either saved or healed. Instead, I should be content to attain the moderate goal that Freud wryly set: to turn my neurosis (about God) into ordinary unhappiness.

This sounds like nothing much of an accomplishment, but it can be extraordinarily difficult. The Jansenist genius, Pascal, anticipated my predicament three hundred years ago. Citing the same Jewish Bible that I have delighted in since childhood, he described the troubles of a state not too far different from my own:

Ecclesiastes shows that man without God is totally ignorant and inescapably unhappy, for anyone is unhappy who wills but cannot do. Now he wants to be happy and assured of some truth, and yet is equally incapable of knowing and of not desiring to know. He cannot even doubt.

I would not wish to be in Pascal's "pitiful state . . . seeing too much to deny and not enough to affirm." Above all, I would like to be capable of knowing, and of doubting. Hence, knowing what my forefathers knew, about their God and their faith, has been terribly important to me. Of course, as the conventional wisdom instructs us, we learn to know what we wish to know. What I have learned, to my delight, is that as our sages have interpreted the tradition of their teachings, there is no one knowledge, no one teaching. That fits my skeptical temperament perfectly. Thus, one of my favorite selections from the Midrash is one whose meaning has perplexed me for forty years, since the time I translated it, and yet which I find irresistible. It is, naturally, about faith — specifically, the Torah; but it views that Torah in a light different from that in which the Torah presents itself.

This Torah is like two paths, one of sunlight and one of snow. Take the one and die of the sun, take the other and die in the snow.

What to do? Walk between the Two.

— *Yerushalmi, Hagigah 77a.*

So the Torah — the teachings of and about God — is *not* the one strait and narrow path to salvation it has always taught us to believe it is. There are at least two possible paths, and neither of them is "the path of life"; both are perilous, both lead to death. One must carefully walk *between* these two dread paths if one wishes to study and live the Torah. What do these two paths represent? one begins wondering in a literary-critic mode. Is sunlight heat, brilliance, enthusiasm, mysticism, *Kabbalah*? Conversely, is snow the chill, rigorous, brilliant severity of the Halakhah — the legal code? And the way between — is that Horace's golden mean? So God's teachings are to be studied and practised in moderation?

Not very likely. This is enigmatic wisdom, after all, not the Polonius-type advice to ardent young scholars, the kind of cliché common sense that has endeared "to thine own self be true" to audiences who wonder why Hamlet, a bright university man, is so irrational in his treatment of his mother. We can guess, but simply do not know exactly what this Midrash means. If only we had the context . . . . But the text itself rings true, for all its mystery — or perhaps because of it? The mystery is that Torah — God's will — is a place of life and death, to which no broad ways lead.

This is one of many sayings in the Jewish tradition that seem to contradict the plain sense of the Torah. Yet they were spoken by people who certainly believed in the God who, they were convinced, gave the Torah.

Take the moot question of divine intervention in human affairs. The Torah is full of miracles, which are decisive assertions of God's immediate and active presence in the world. But the post-Biblical masters refused to honor such miracles in their own time when the miracles ran counter to the masters's joint interpretation of God's Torah as it applied to everyday life. They even had the *huzpah* to cite his Torah against him.

Thus, the Midrash tells us, on one occasion God performed not one

but three miracles in support of the ingenious interpretation of a brilliant maverick scholar which ran counter to the common opinion of the other rabbis. "A voice from heaven" went so far as to proclaim: "The law is according to Rabbi Eliezer." What could be more divinely authoritative?

But the rabbis stood their ground: "The Torah has already been given once and for all from Mount Sinai. We do not listen to voices from heaven." And they cited a Biblical verse: "After the majority must one incline." Nor were they concerned about God's disapproval: "What was the Holy One, blessed be He, doing at that moment? . . . He was smiling and saying: 'My children have defeated me, my children have defeated me!'"

This sounds innocent, but they were not acting in all innocence. They knew what they were doing, and had a sophisticated justification for it: "There are seventy faces to the Torah . . . Turn it this way, turn it that way, there is everything in it" — even contradictory things which the famous Talmudic dialectic (*pilpul*) was developed to reconcile.

Maimonides, the greatest Jewish thinker of the Middle Ages, is a prime example of the reconciliation of the Torah with the thought (and demands) of a later age. As a committed Jew who had fled his native Spain rather than convert to Islam, he insisted on the primacy of Moses as the pre-eminent prophet of Israel — and, by implication, of the world — over the contending claims of Mohammed and the Koran. On the other hand, as a modern 12th-century savant, Maimonides could not accept the literal anthropomorphism of the Torah, according to which God dealt directly and personally with man. God, Maimonides declared: "is unknowable — his Oneness is endless; he has no semblance — he is bodiless." (This is from the *Yigdal*, sung on the High Holy Days, a versified summary of the thirteen articles of Maimonides' credo.) Maimonides concurred with the classical Greek philosophers that "only like can know like." From this he extrapolated that, God and man being unlike entities, no human being could know God on equal terms. Hence, the *Yigdal* limits Moses' access to God at the moment of revelation on Mount Sinai, even as it praises him: "Never has there arisen in Israel/A prophet like Moses beholding God's image."

So it was the image of God, not God himself, that Moses beheld on Mount Sinai, although the Torah asserts unambiguously in the Book of Exodus: "The Lord spoke unto Moses, face to face as a man speaks to his friend." For Maimonides, God can have no human friends, not even Moses, the prophet closest to him of all men, and one to whom God so frequently "spoke."

Why was it so important to Maimonides to make this distinction? One can surmise that it was an implied denial of the claim of Christianity. God, by definition, was incommensurate with man; hence, he could not have communicated any part of his divinity to a Son of man.

Again, Maimonides affirmed in his credo his "complete and perfect faith" in the coming of the Messiah, *though he tarry*. By exclusion, Jesus

could not have been the Messiah whom Maimonides was still awaiting. True, the Christians could accurately cite passages in the book of Isaiah prophesying the coming of a Messiah who would share God's divinity. But, with the phrase "God's image," Maimonides was referring us once again to the Torah, to the Book of Ezekiel, in which God appears to the awe-struck prophet in "the likeness of a form," the semblance of a semblance, the image of an image — at second remove, so to speak, and not in his own person. (For God there could be no proper semblance in Maimonides' philosophy.)

This may seem pure speculation, "reading between the lines" in Leo Strauss' phrase, what Maimonides was getting at despite the censorship of his time. To me it makes sense that, in his credo, Maimonides was distinguishing the God of the Torah from the God of the New Testament and the God of the Koran.

But if, as I claim, I do not believe in God — personal or national — why do I talk so much about what our fathers thought about him? Why does he keep turning up in my writing and thoughts? I have argued in the past that one cannot reject out of hand a sentiment that has persisted in human society in many forms apparently since the beginning of the species, and which still exerts a powerful force in our own day. One must understand what it is that one is rejecting.

But this argument has never been very convincing, even to myself. If piety is so important, why reduce it to a subject of intellectual curiosity?

Recently, reading Gershom Sholem's classic *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, I found a kind of justification for my preoccupation with God, despite an avowed agnosticism. Scholem quotes a Hasidic tale told to him by the Hebrew writer, S.Y. Agnon.

When the Baal Shem had a difficult task before him, he would go to a certain place in the woods, light a fire and meditate in prayer — and what he had set out to perform was done. When a generation later the Maggid of Meseritz was faced with the same task he would go to the same place in the woods and say: We can no longer light a fire, nor do we know the secret meditations belonging to the prayers, but we do know the place in the woods to which it all belongs — and that must be sufficient; and sufficient it was. But, when another generation had passed and Rabbi Israel of Rishin was called upon to perform the task, he sat down on his golden chair in his castle and said: We cannot light the fire, we cannot speak the prayers, we do not know the place, but we can tell the story of how it was done . . . And the story which he told had the same effect as the actions of the other three.

So I, too, like Rabbi Israel of Rishin, must tell the story of how it was done: how my fathers believed in God. I do not know how efficacious my telling their story will be. But perhaps I do not speak to, and for, myself alone.

# ***“There is No Plural in the Verb Sh’ma . . . No Plural to the Noun Israel”***

**SHULY RUBIN SCHWARTZ**

THE STORY ABOUT THE LONE JEW ON A DESERT island who builds two *shuls* — the one he prays in and the one he wouldn’t step foot into — would be funnier if it didn’t ring so true. The joke does have a positive side to it: In order to show disdain for the other *shul*, this proverbial Jew has to attend his own! (At least he’s going to *shul*!) Yet, the story’s prevailing negative message reflects the gnawing reality that we Jews have never agreed on vital religious issues. Our conflicts, while at times producing positive results, have also caused much damage, diverting limited energy and resources and weakening efforts to preserve and promote Judaism and things Jewish.

Concerned Jews today are understandably fearful of the potential damage that might result from the arrogant tone and rhetoric echoing from contemporary Jewish religious groups. Reform, Conservative and Orthodox denominations are intensifying their individual efforts to respond to the urgent challenges of contemporary American Jewish life. Each group has renewed its claims to authenticity; each emphasizes that *it* is the denomination best suited to win and retain the hearts and minds of American Jews. Such convictions have bolstered support for denominational institutions and publications while instilling a new aggressiveness in the process. Conservative’s “militant centrism,” Reform’s open espousal of patrilineal descent and Orthodoxy’s move to the right, coupled with its rejection of cooperation with Conservative and Reform, have drawn the lines of separation more sharply than ever before. Granted, each denomination has dissenters within its ranks, and some work tirelessly for conciliation. Nonetheless, the belligerent stance predominates.

This attitude has affected the study of American Jewish history as well. Historians are now turning their attention to the history of American Judaism, a woefully neglected area of study, and much of this new research has concentrated on recovering the past of the denominational groups. Scholars are delving deeply into the development of institutions,

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individuals and ideologies pivotal to each movement's success.<sup>1</sup>

This new research lends insight into the unique agenda faced by each denomination at the beginning of the twentieth century. Reform was in the midst of a painful reassessment of the radical changes made in the preceding decades. Conservative Judaism was struggling to define itself in opposition to Reform and to establish a vital institution and constituency of its own. Orthodoxy's challenge was to separate from the Conservative camp, organize as a distinctive group and reconcile the American and east-European factions within its midst. In no small measure, these developments engendered competition, accusatory rhetoric and intolerance among the denominations, similar to what we are experiencing today.

Ninety years ago, though, the Jewish community was much smaller and the boundaries between the groups not yet hardened. Many of the leaders of these religious groups worked together in organizations that were established to address the common challenges facing them as American Jews — anti-Semitism, Americanization of immigrants, charity and relief. More important, many leaders also recognized that American Judaism, too, faced challenges that they needed to address together. They felt the urgent need to fashion a Judaism meaningful to the new immigrants and to assure the religious commitment of the young. They agreed on the necessity of eliminating Jewish ignorance and increasing Jewish observance. Because of this concern, certain individuals who were best noted for their partisan views managed, at crucial moments, to reach beyond their denominationalist aims in order to strengthen Judaism as a whole in America. They collaborated on projects that, by their very nature, forced them to bridge their differences for the larger good. Such substantive collaboration was never smooth, but the results were both impressive and inspiring.

There is no better example of their achievements than the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, published in New York in 1901-6. This twelve-volume work was the first comprehensive collection of all the available material pertaining to the Jews — their history, literature, philosophy, rituals, sociology and biography. The encyclopedia was designed to combat growing anti-Semitism by demonstrating the worth of the Jew and the value of his beliefs and practices throughout the ages. The *Jewish Encyclopedia* was also

1. See, for example, the 1983 issue of the *American Jewish Archives*, with articles by Jeffrey S. Gurock, Abraham J. Karp and David Polish on the Orthodox, Conservative and Reform rabbinates, respectively; *Profiles in American Judaism* by Marc Lee Raphael (San Francisco, 1984); and *The American Synagogue: A Sanctuary Transformed*, ed. Jack Wertheimer (Cambridge, 1987). The lattermost includes articles on the development of the synagogue in the Reform, Conservative and Orthodox movements (by Leon A. Jick, Jack Wertheimer and Jeffrey S. Gurock, respectively) as well as articles on the pivotal historical roles played by specific synagogues and issues. Note, especially, the extensive footnotes which refer to many of the recent articles, books and research-in-progress on specific topics concerning the various denominations.



meant to serve as a summary and continuation of nineteenth-century Jewish *Wissenschaft* scholarship. Finally, and most important for us, this compendium of information was to stimulate Jewish pride, commitment, observance and scholarship. In this way, the encyclopedia was part of the larger effort by American Jewish leaders to promote a flowering of Jewish cultural, religious and scholarly life in America.

The content of the work was supervised by an editorial board made up primarily of prominent American Jewish scholars. Reform and traditionalist, Zionist and anti-Zionist, rabbi and layman, these individuals — including Cyrus Adler, Gotthard Deutsch, Louis Ginzberg, Richard Gottheil, Emil Hirsch, Joseph Jacobs, Marcus Jastrow, Morris Jastrow, Kaufmann Kohler, Herman Rosenthal, Solomon Schechter, and the managing editor, Isidore Singer — worked together to complete the project. They were aided by hundreds of world-renowned scholars who contributed articles and editorial advice.

Many of these individuals held views and positions deeply at odds with each other. Kaufmann Kohler and Emil Hirsch were prominent rabbis representing the radical wing of Reform: Kohler had been the primary author of the Pittsburgh Platform and his brother-in-law, Hirsch, was a leading advocate of the Sunday-Sabbath. Both of these men, as well as Morris Jastrow and Louis Ginzberg, accepted the results of higher Biblical criticism; traditionalists like Adler and Schechter were vehemently opposed to this position. Some of the more prolific collaborators, including Judah D. Eisenstein, Bernard Drachman and Lewis N. Dembitz, all of whom were Orthodox, came into frequent conflict with the more liberal editors. Finally, most of these individuals found themselves at odds with the managing editor. Though they would not have been able to undertake the project without his pluck and determination, many voiced concern about his motivations, shallow scholarship and lack of commitment to the goal of invigorating Judaism in America. As Kohler succinctly put it, Singer was like “the Nordaus and the Herzls, a *must* Jew, not a Jew by deep religious conviction, and, therefore, not fit to be the *historian* or the *Encyclopedist of Judaism*.”<sup>2</sup>

Despite their differences, these men worked out a *modus operandi* for the encyclopedia project. Certain positions dominated from the start. For example, they agreed to include a history of modern political Zionism, even though Morris Jastrow, Hirsch and Kohler were strongly opposed to the movement. The lengthy entry, “Zionism,” written by the editor,

2. *American Hebrew* (AH), (19 Aug. 1898): 451-2. This quotation also aptly captures Kohler's negative attitude toward modern political Zionism. Other examples of editorial opposition to Singer are found in AH, (16 Sept. 1898): 568; *Die Deborah* 44 (3 Nov. 1898): 8; Eli Ginzberg, *Keeper of the Law* (Philadelphia, 1966), p. 66; Adler to Gottheil, 15 Jan. 1899, Feb. 1899, and 24 June 1899 (marked “Personal”), [Cyrus Adler Papers, Jewish Theological Seminary of America (JTSA), New York]; and Adler to Funk & Wagnalls (draft), [Feb. 1899, Cyrus Adler Papers, American Jewish Historical Society, Waltham, Mass.].

Richard Gottheil, a leading American Zionist, was the first major historical account of the movement.

The editors also agreed to present critically and without bias the results of modern scholarship, including critical Bible scholarship. Though certain editors remained opposed to higher Biblical criticism, sufficient reassurances of impartiality and balance were given to ensure editorial support for its inclusion. Joseph Jacobs justified the decision by noting that

even the most orthodox, while disagreeing with the method, has to take account of it, and would have reason to complain if he could not find in the *Encyclopedia* the views concerning the sacred books accepted by the large majority of scholars.<sup>3</sup>

Above all, the editors had to trust each other. That they shared a language of scholarly discourse and a common educational background greatly facilitated this process. Most had studied at one of the German rabbinical seminaries dedicated to the furtherance of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and held doctorates from secular universities. Yet the editors also needed specific assurances from each other that impartiality would truly inform the project in all fields. Cyrus Adler was one of the editors who was most persistent about obtaining such guarantees. A pivotal figure in most of the Jewish organizations founded during the period, he served on the encyclopedia board as head of the departments of Post-Talmudic Archeology, the History of the Jews in America, and Manners, Customs and Liturgy. On joining the board he rationalized his participation in this way:

It has been said in some quarters that radical influences are evident in the makeup of the Encyclopedia. Well, radical or reform Jews can be just as fair and unfair, I presume, as orthodox Jews. The ability to state a proposition dispassionately is monopolized by no section of mankind.<sup>4</sup>

Successful collaboration was bolstered by the conciliatory spirit among religious groups that surrounded Solomon Schechter's arrival in the United States in 1902 to serve as president of the newly reorganized Jewish Theological Seminary of America. The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations formally adopted a resolution wishing Schechter well.<sup>5</sup> Emil Hirsch said:

We of the Reform wing, so labeled, rejoice no less than do his closer partisans in the advent of Dr. Schechter . . . He who has come to us will stimulate anew the interest for Jewish writings and research. As an humble provincial teacher I would ask him to permit me to bid him godspeed to his new duties, as well as to his old labors. I for one begin to regret that my home is not in your metropolis. For if it were I should beg the master to allow me to sit as a learner at his feet in his classes.<sup>6</sup>

3. Joseph Jacobs, *The Jewish Encyclopedia: A Guide to Its Contents, An Aid to Its Use* (New York, 1906), p. 6.

4. *Jewish Comment* [Baltimore], (12 Oct. 1900): 1.

5. *AH*, (11 July, 1902): 218.

6. *Judean Addresses* (New York, 1917) 2: 25-6.

Schechter, who joined the editorial board of the encyclopedia at this time, was also optimistic about working with his Reform colleagues, especially Kohler, whom he had first met in England. Though cognizant of their differences, Schechter believed that he would always be able to establish friendly relations with scholars.<sup>7</sup>

One of the reasons why Kohler, in particular, was initially accepted by Schechter and other traditionalists is that, despite his association with the Pittsburgh Platform and radical Reform, he was not so easily categorized. Kohler was ambivalent about Judaism in many ways, for he was committed to ancient lore *and* to modern scholarship, to the preservation of tradition *and* to the evolutionary development of Judaism. It was hard to oppose the Kohler who, in 1892, admitted his error in supporting the Sunday-Sabbath and exhorted his colleagues:

To rebuild, to rekindle faith and love for our glorious history and mission is the great and lofty task of Reform . . . We must once again be possessed by the "Ruach Hakkodesh," the divine power of inspiration to create new, life-imparting, impressive and attractive forms to fill the soul with the beauty of holiness . . . We have too long been vigorous and energetic in abrogating and pulling down. Let us unite and co-operate in building up Judaism to render it the object of love, of pride and joy for all.<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, in 1898, Kohler had urged his colleagues not only to rebuild Reform but also to join forces with other Jews in revitalizing Judaism as a whole:

Let all differences of opinion be waived. Let all wrangling and bickering between Reform and Orthodoxy, between Conservative and Radical, between East and West, in pulpit and press, cease once and for all! . . . Mark well! There is no plural in the verb *Sh'ma* — hear; no plural to the noun Israel . . . I am the very last to deprecate Orthodoxy. It is the soil out of which we have drawn sap and marrow . . . we will never forget to pay her homage and reverence her in due humility. Not with her do I find fault, but with those who wear her badge without being entitled to the same . . . We need both a power working for expansion and assimilation, and a power working for stability and seclusion.<sup>9</sup>

It was this attitude of respect for differences and for the Jewish tradition that enabled these men to carve out a tentative *modus operandi*. No one, however, could guarantee that this arrangement would work smoothly in practice. For one thing, the board's dealings were affected by increasing polarization among the Reform and traditionalist camps. Positive feelings were short-lived and, starting with his inaugural address of November 1902, Schechter began to attack Reform by pointing out the dangers of "Occidentalizing" Judaism. Then, in an address given in Koh-

7. Schechter to Kohler, 27 Mar. 1902, [Kaufmann Kohler Papers, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio]; Solomon Schechter, *Seminary Addresses and Other Papers* (New York, 1959), p. 35; and Kohler to Ginzberg, 30 Dec. 1902. [Louis Ginzberg Papers, JTSA].

8. *Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis* 3 (1892), p. 112.

9. *A Living Faith: Selected Sermons and Addresses from the Literary Remains of Dr. Kaufmann Kohler*, ed. Samuel S. Cohon (Cincinnati, 1948), pp. 8-18.

ler's honor, Schechter warned of the anti-Semitic underpinnings of higher Biblical criticism. Inevitably, many Reform leaders reversed their favorable opinion of Schechter. By 1904, he was subjected to bitter criticism by those to the left (including Hirsch and Singer) for his conservative stance. Singer dubbed the Jewish Theological Seminary the "New York Sinai for pseudo-Orthodoxy [sic] of Madison and Fifth Avenue."<sup>10</sup>

Ironically, during this same year, Orthodox leaders also attacked Schechter. The Union of Orthodox Rabbis condemned the Jewish Theological Seminary for being non-Orthodox. Joining in this campaign was encyclopedia collaborator Judah Eisenstein. He used *Jewish Encyclopedia* entries by Louis Ginzberg as proof that leaders of the Seminary expounded higher Biblical criticism.<sup>11</sup>

Naturally, this mounting denominationalist tension influenced the editorial process and the excitement engendered by the prospect of collaboration quickly wore off. Editors scrutinized each others' articles, and it slowly became apparent that certain editors and collaborators, whether consciously or unconsciously, were shaping the content and stance of the material to promote their particular viewpoint. Kaufmann Kohler was particularly influential. As chairman of the executive committee and head of the department of Theology and Philosophy, Kohler left a strong personal imprint on the encyclopedia. He wrote 288 entries on a wide range of substantive and controversial topics, including virtually all of the crucial entries in his department through volume 8, when he left New York to assume the presidency of Hebrew Union College.

Adler grew increasingly distressed by the combined power of Kohler and Hirsch, who served as head of the department of Bible and also contributed articles on Judaism for Kohler. Together, Adler claimed, these men were shifting the encyclopedia in favor of Reform. Certain entries support Adler's fears. For example, under the heading, "Commandment," which bears the initials of both Kohler and Hirsch, one reads that "all *moral* laws are virtually and in their ultimate analysis divine commandments" (emphasis mine). Adler eventually protested to the publisher, the Lutheran minister Isaac Funk, president of the Funk & Wagnalls Co.:

The final result is something like this: We are getting a certain amount of biography, more or less well done, not of the highest importance; we are getting a certain amount of local history, of more or less importance, but not vital; we are getting some very respectable articles on Jewish law, but not vital; and a great many other matters of interest, not vital, which are done in a more or less satisfactory way usual in Encyclopedias.

10. Schechter, *Seminary Addresses*, pp. 9-39, 53-63; Isidore Singer, "Professor Schechter's Message to the Jews of America," *New Era*, 5 (Oct. 1904): 480-91; *Hebrew Standard*, (28 Oct. 1904): pp. 12; and *Reform Advocate*, (10 Sept. 1904): pp. 52-3, (5 Nov. 1904): 247-50, and (19 Nov. 1904): 295.

11. *AH*, (1 July 1904): 180, (8 July 1904): 204-05, and (29 July 1904): 282; and Mel Scult, "Controversial Beginnings: Kaplan's First Congregation," *Reconstructionist* 50 (July-Aug. 1985): 23-4.

The two things which virtually make for the history of Judaism in all times, namely the Bible, and theology, in short everything that pertains to the life of our church are being dealt with by two gentlemen representing a minute sect, if it may properly be called so . . . The *Encyclopedia* is becoming in its essentials a partisan work, and my studies and my training and my duty to the Jewish community and to the *Encyclopedia* itself make it necessary for me, however reluctant I am to do so, to say to you virtually that the work must either change its policy or I shall leave it.<sup>12</sup>

Sechechter shared Adler's concerns. As he confided to Mayer Sulzberger, the prominent Philadelphia jurist and communal leader:

Unless we can manage that Adler and I get some control over Kohler's departments I will resign at once. K hates Rabbinic Judaism like any *goy* and has become so aggressive that the *Encyclopedia* will become the *resha'ut* of the 20th century.<sup>13</sup>

What is so fascinating about these criticisms is not that they were voiced — for these arguments and accusations sound all too familiar — but, rather, that they led to constructive change that improved subsequent volumes of the encyclopedia.

One can see the evolution of compromise in the treatment of the topic "Judaism." Kohler wrote the main article on "Judaism," and his treatment is indicative of his overall approach. Though meant to describe Judaism as a whole, the article nevertheless betrays Kohler's underlying commitment to Reform. He marshalls a wealth of rabbinic sources to anchor his description of Judaism in the tradition, but the greater part of his entry is devoted to the non-particularistic aspects of Judaism. Describing the role of law in Judaism, Kohler gives an eloquent defense of Torah and counters Christianity's charges of legalism by stressing the joyous privilege of performing commandments granted because of God's special favor. Yet, this section is written almost entirely in the *past* tense. The law *served* an important function for the Jews in impressing life with holiness. Only with reference to the Sabbath and festivals does Kohler indicate that they have been significant at all times.

Even his more balanced summary reflects his Reform convictions:

Thus Judaism presents two streams or currents of thought ever running parallel to each other: the one conservative, the other progressive and liberal; the one accentuating the national and ritualistic, the other the cosmopolitan and spiritual elements; mysticism here and rationalism there, these together forming the centripetal and centrifugal forces of Judaism to keep it in *continuous progress* upon its God-appointed track. (emphasis mine)

Kohler accepts the legitimacy and significance of both streams but tips his hat in favor of Reform by placing them under the rubric of continuous progress.

12. Adler to Funk, 24 Feb. 1903, in Cyrus Adler, *Cyrus Adler: Selected Letters*, ed. Ira Robinson (Philadelphia, 1985) 1: 100-1.

13. Meir Ben-Horin, "Solomon Schechter to Judge Mayer Sulzberger, Part II: Letters from the Seminary Period (1902-1915)," *Jewish Social Studies* 27 (Apr. 1965): 79.

Traditionalists were unable to change the article, given Kohler's stature and position as department head, but they left their mark in an asterisk and note inserted with the article "Judaism:"

\*It is natural that divergent views upon so complex a subject should exist. The following article is frankly written from the standpoint of Reform Judaism. For a presentation of the more conservative aspect of the subject see RELIGION; THEOLOGY.

This note alerted the reader that despite the all-inclusive title "Judaism," the article was not a definitive summary of the totality of Judaism.

In actuality, no entry "Religion" appears; "Theology" served as the conservative counterpoint to "Judaism." It was written by Jacob Z. Lauterbach who embodied traditional Jewish and secular scholarly credentials and old-world piety, elements essential to successful collaboration. Significantly, Kohler's initial appears next to Lauterbach's at the end of the entry, marking his editorial acceptance. In "Theology," Lauterbach devotes far less space than does Kohler to the universalistic aspects of Judaism and speaks about the importance of revelation and law in the present tense. Moreover, he stresses the nationalistic aspect of the Jewish ideal, something that Kohler simply ignored.

Lauterbach's entry, as well as many other articles on the details of Jewish observance that were written by traditionalists for the later volumes, illustrates that the encyclopedia, though it lacked consistency, benefitted from the interchange among its diverse editorial board. Thanks to these articles, the concerned reader could find complete, detailed information on specific practices that were described, not as quaint oddities or even as important institutions in the Jewish past, but, rather, as vital aspects of a vibrant Jewish life. (Yet, most of these particularistic articles are entered under transliterated Hebrew titles. This practice helped ensure that the casual non-Jewish reader would not easily come across them.)

As might be expected, not all of the editors or collaborators were able to see eye to eye long enough to remain with the project until the end. Though Adler never did resign (despite several threats), Schechter left the project in 1904. Those collaborators who were drawn to American Orthodoxy also found themselves increasingly at odds with the project. It was harder for them to find common ground with Reformers than it was for the enlightened traditionalists who shared an historical perspective on Judaism. Thus, Bernard Drachman's contributions to the encyclopedia are limited primarily to the first three volumes, and Eisenstein publicly criticized the work even as he continued to write for it. Yet, enough individuals did see the project through to completion, and the *Jewish Encyclopedia* stands as inspiring testimony to this prevailing measure of co-operation.

The completed project also illustrates the mutual respect that was essential to such a venture. For example, bitter disagreement and rivalries

did not quash the personal cordiality and friendship between adversaries like Kohler and Schechter. Even as Schechter criticized Kohler's views, he explained that he admired Kohler's "wide learning, contagious enthusiasm and noble character" and honored him too much to take up the position of antagonist. Kohler reciprocated these feelings. In 1903, he accepted Schechter's invitation to deliver a course of lectures at the Jewish Theological Seminary and, in that same year, he spoke at the dedication of the Seminary's new building.<sup>14</sup> As Kohler later wrote:

Our mutual friendship and esteem was never diminished nor interfered with by occasional public controversies carried on for the sake of the cause we both held dear and sacred and prompted only by love of God and truth.<sup>15</sup>

Schechter and Kohler later worked together on the Jewish Publication Society's Bible translation, another remarkable collaborative achievement of the time.<sup>16</sup> Adler, who also worked with them on the Bible translation, recalled that experience fondly:

No one of the small company that remains which witnessed the clashes followed by evidences of tenderness and friendship which animated Schechter and Kohler during those seven eventful years can ever forget that he was in the presence of giants.<sup>17</sup>

It is hard to imagine a project like this one succeeding in the United States of the 1980s. Yet, perhaps we can take heart in the accomplishments of those Jewish leaders and scholars who found it within themselves to work together at the beginning of the twentieth century. Would that we might become similarly inspired to meet our own challenges!

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14. Schechter, *Seminary Addresses*, p. 39; Kohler to Schechter, 7 Dec. 1903, [Solomon Schechter Papers, JTSA]; and Michael Meyer, "A Centennial History," in *Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion at One Hundred Years*, ed. Samuel E. Karff (Cincinnati, 1976), pp. 72, 259, n. 64.

15. *Hebrew Union College and Other Addresses* (Cincinnati, 1916), pp. 331-2.

16. See Jonathan D. Sarna's forthcoming work on the history of the Jewish Publication Society.

17. "Kaufmann Kohler," [Adler Papers, JTSA].



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# *The Unity of the Jewish People — A Theological View*

SEYMOUR SIEGEL

THE UNITY OF JEWISH PEOPLE IS ONE OF THE perennial issues facing Jewish life. While much is said about it, much less is done. The following is a modest contribution towards a clarification of the important problem.

I would like to concentrate on the theological basis. There are, of course, pragmatic, nationalistic, political and even halakhic reasons why all Jews can be seen as sharing the same destiny and the same responsibilities. However, what is of great interest to me is what it is in Jewish theology which mandates us to forge ourselves into the fulfillment of the description of our people: “*attah ehad veshimkha ehad umi keamkha yisrael, goy ehad ba’arez*” (You are one and your name is one and who is like your nation Israel, a people unique upon the earth). Though the latter *ehad*, in this context, primarily means a unique people, it does have the overtones of *one* people.

One of the ways we can learn how to affirm the unity of the Jewish people theologically, regardless of differences of religious outlook and practice, is to look to the past. If we cannot find an answer, we might at least find an approach that would inspire a solution. In certain epochs, especially during the period of the Second Commonwealth, Judaism was characterized by an immense diversity. There were many views on theological and halakhic issues, but though there were great tensions and even conflicts, most of the diverse groups managed to live together. This tolerance found its most eloquent expression in the relations between the schools of Hillel and Shammai, reflected in the oft-quoted statement in *Yevamot* 1, 4b, “Although the schools of Hillel and Shammai differed on many points of law . . . they were not debarred from intermarrying one with the other.” This toleration of diverse views was not, however absolute. Some groups, like the Christians and the Dead Sea Scroll sect, were not recognized as part of the Jewish people. What were the criteria which differentiated tolerable dissent from irreconcilable deviation? An answer to this important question might help us to face our own predicament.

In an article published in *The Reader’s Guide to the Great Religions*, Professor Judah Goldin has written:

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When we seek to discover what is normative for these centuries, we must recognize that *all* sources are a record of particular teachings striving to become normative, all represent the ambition of particular groups to have the whole of Israel adopt their particular emphases. And so long as they were still vigorously arguing *with each other*, Judaism was *in process toward final formulation*. One might say it was feeling its way toward definitiveness. What made the teachings of some one or other group *not* normative was the withdrawal of the particular group from the common argument, from the resolution to press its point of view on the folk as a whole, where the folk as a whole was located. Issuing polemical statements from a reservation to which one has retired, and where one has adopted a particular routine for privileged initiates, is already an expression of giving up and disengagement, and a sign of having become tangential (p. 312).

If Professor Goldin's views are correct, only those groups in rabbinic times which remained within the community, arguing their point of view with opponents, were able to create normative Judaism. Groups such as the Essenes and the Christians, who withdrew from the common dialogue, who saw themselves either as so distant from the people or so superior that they could not freely engage their fellow Jews and share their destiny, had no share in the community. The applicability of these reflections to our current situation is obvious.

Another concept which explains the overarching unity of rabbinic Judaism, in spite of crucial differences in viewpoint and practice, is the framework suggested by Max Kadushin in his classical studies of the rabbinic mind. He attributes the unity within diversity to the fact that "Rabbinic Judaism based itself upon value concepts which are not only undefined, but non-definable." According to Kadushin, what unified the rabbinic mind was a series of concepts such as Torah, Israel, Messiah, and *Malkhut Shamayim*, the Kingdom of God. These concepts are not as logically defined as philosophical concepts might be. Rather, they are illustrated in stories, parables, interpretations, and are concretized in halakhah. They have names, but not rigid definitions. For example, all believed in the Messiah, but there were different definitions of who the messiah might be. This indeterminacy of definition gave each individual the opportunity to express his individuality, but the fact that the whole community used the same term forged its unity.

Does this mean that you can say whatever you wish about commitments of the people or about Judaism? There are two limiting phenomena which set borders on possible interpretations. One is the concepts themselves. Their names and obvious meanings curtail wild deviations. One could hardly assert that Judaism is based on atheism when such a concept as *Malkhut Shamayim* exists. One could hardly deny that Judaism has a concept of the hereafter when *tehiat ha-metim* (resurrection) is such a vital part of the liturgy.

There is also in Judaism the presence of dogma, which limits the scope of interpretation. Yet, even in this area, there are some interesting

flexibilities. The rabbinic dogmas such as *mattan Torah* (the giving of the Torah), "are not marshalled into a creed." That is to say two things. First, they are not put into the position of basic principles from which all the teachings of Judaism are derived. Second, like the value-concepts, the dogmas are, to a considerable extent, dynamic, allowing for flexibility of interpretation and differences of opinion which even allow ambiguity at times. Thus, regarding the dogma of resurrection:

Some hold that only those who died in the Land of Israel will be resurrected; others, also basing themselves on a biblical verse, declare that those who died outside the land will be resurrected as well. Still another opinion has it that the resurrection will take place first in the land of Israel. There are also further views, mainly variations of the opinions given here.

Rabbinic Judaism is not merely a matter of moods in regard to its concepts, nor, on the other hand is it the product of a creed. Its dogmas prevented it from becoming entirely the one, and its value concepts saved it from becoming the other. Even during the Middle Ages, when it is assumed that there was uniformity of belief and doctrine, the situation was much more subtle. In his *Principles of Judaism*, Professor Julius Guttman points out that the formulation of dogma by Maimonides and others was not undertaken in order to create a catechism. Rather, the function of the *ikkarim*, principles, was to set the limits of interpretation.

Why did those generations of the Middle Ages find it necessary to establish Judaism upon a foundation of articulated principles? Even in the medieval period there were serious religious differences in the Jewish community. Popular beliefs that were basically divergent from Judaism but that had an intense hold on the masses entered the Jewish world, not necessarily in the same manner as has happened in our time, but no less similar to the changes of talmudic times. It therefore became necessary to mark boundaries beyond which one could not go in discussing Judaism. By setting codes of principles, fundamentals or dogmas the medieval sages limited the apparently limitless freedom of interpretation.

There are some other interesting aspects which are relevant to our issue. Professor Abraham Joshua Heschel makes a distinction between theology and depth-theology. The latter refers to the experience of the divine, which is part of the consciousness of the pious man who, from time to time, is overwhelmed by the impact upon his life of the divine light, and knows better and deeper than do those who speculate on God that He is near to Him. This experience is what Heschel calls depth theology. It is the stimulus of the words, *lekha dumiya tehilah* (before you, silence is praise).

However, men do not remain silent when they touch the hem of the divine, or even when they see His back. The process of analysis, description and the formulation of the divine experience is theology. Theology, which aims at precision, easy communication, systemization and universality is, ironically, partly true and partly untrue. Its truthfulness is that

it points to the reality about which it speaks. It is an allusion to the divine reality which lies very much beyond expression. Therefore, he who claims exclusive accuracy for his theological formulations is not true to the divine experience. As kabbalistic teaching so often affirms, there is a God beyond God. Therefore, a pluralism of theological expression and belief is to be expected. How could it be otherwise?

What emerges from these considerations is that the primary process in Judaism, indeed, the very hinge upon which the door turns, is *interpretation*. The whole of Judaism is, as Heschel said, a midrash on revelation. It is a formulation in thought, word and deed of the primary founding experience of the Jewish people in its relationship to the divine. The extraordinary freedom of interpretation which characterized Judaism in most of its epochs meant that there was built into the structure a liberating, even exhilarating force. However, no community can allow all attempts at interpretation to be equally valid, since this would result in anarchy. Therefore, from time to time, the community formulates dogmas (as it did in the talmudic as well as the medieval times), to set before itself the limits of interpretation.

In addition to the factor of dogma, there is the imprecisely functioning, though powerful, force of *klal yisrael*, catholic Israel, described by Solomon Schechter. Its conscience is able to decide on what was called the Secondary Meaning — or the process of interpretation. What is the spirit of the people and its traditions and what is not; what is a permissible midrash on Judaism, and what is not. For example, the Christian midrash and the Karaite midrash were rejected, but the Kabbalistic and the Hasidic midrashim were incorporated into Judaism, enriching it immeasurably. Zionism, almost universally rejected by both the orthodox and the liberal wings of Judaism, won its central role in the soul of the people. Thus catholic Israel, in touch, as Schechter put it, with the total aspirations of the time, puts its mark of evaluation on interpretations of the concepts of Judaism that are set forth by its leaders and renders its mystically important judgments. The theological basis for this idea is the concept that the history of the Jewish people is somehow under divine guidance. The divine speaks to us through the sacred writings of our people. It also speaks to us through the sacred history of the people Israel.

In discussing these vital issues, it is important to turn our attention to the famous dictum of the Rambam (*Hilkhos Teshuvah* 3, 8). "One who says that the Torah does not come from the Almighty, even one verse, even one word, if he says that Moshe said it himself, he is considered as if he had denied the entire Torah." This ruling reflects the passage, in tractate, *Sanhedrin*, which defines the person alluded to in the Mishnah: "One who says that the Torah does not come from heaven has no share in the world to come." This outlook has led many, especially in orthodoxy, to deny the legitimacy of liberal groups within Judaism who question the plenary inspiration of the Pentateuch. The whole passage is the subject

of fascinating analysis by A. J. Heschel, who points out that there was a significant school of rabbinic thought that defined Torah as only the Ten Commandments. For example, the Mishnah (*Taanit* 4:8), referring to the verse in *Shir Ha-Shirim* (3:11) about *mattan Torah*, seems to include only what was written on the tablets. At the beginning of *Pirkei Avot*, it is said that “Moses received Torah at Mount Sinai.” It is assumed that this refers to the entire Torah, including the oral law. However, such an understanding is contrary to the views of Rabbi Ishmael who believes that the *kellalot* (with a *kof*) (the general principles) and the *peratot* (the specific instances) were given in the *mishkan* (the tabernacle). Therefore, Rabbi Ishmael would not aver that the entire Torah was given at Mount Sinai. A close look at this famous passage shows that the phrase does not say Moshe received *ha-Torah* (the Torah) at Sinai, but that he received Torah. This passage shows that revelation was received on the mountain, but not necessarily the entire corpus of sacred scripture, not even the Pentateuch.

Further, Heschel points out that the parallel in *Avot of Rabba Nathan* states: “Moshe received Torah at Mount Sinai, and how do we know that he wrote it down? The verse says, ‘and he wrote them on two tablets of stone’ (*Devarim* 4:13).” Heschel concludes: “It is difficult to assume that the intention of the interpretation is to assert that the entire Pentateuch was written on two tablets.”

Heschel quotes later sources who also apparently understand “Torah” in these contexts as referring to the Decalogue, not the entire Pentateuch. Most startling is the opinion of the *Mabit* — Rabbi Yoseph mi Trani (in his book *Bet Elohim*, Venice, 1576, Chapter 33). “That which we traditionally teach, that the Torah preceded the world, two thousand years, this refers to the Ten Commandments which were given to Moses at Sinai in the day of *mattan Torah*. For they are called *Torah sham*.” Heschel points out that the usage *Torah min ha-shamayim* (Torah from Heaven); is different from *Torah mi-Sinai*, (Torah From Mt. Sinai). The first usage refers literally to God’s voice, i.e., the Ten Commandments which were transmitted to Moshe at Sinai. Why, then, did other authorities insist that the phrase, *Torah min ha-shamayim*, be interpreted so broadly that the lists of concubines in Esau’s family be acknowledged as being of divine origin? It seems plausible to understand that the broadening of the concept was the result of opposition to heretics who, in the words of the Mishnah, believed that only the Ten Commandments were the product of divine revelation. Therefore, the rabbis wished to assert that the whole of the Pentateuch and its interpretations had to be acknowledged as coming from the divine source. Indeed, Heschel proves, and it is too complicated to cite all the evidence, that there were two schools of thought on the matter: that of Rabbi Ishmael and that of Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Ishmael believed that only the general principles were enunciated on Mt. Sinai, while Rabbi Akiva insisted that the whole Torah, including the halakhot and details, was given there. If Heschel is correct, the original dogma asked Jews to

believe in revelation and that the Ten Commandments were revealed by God to Moshe. The broadening of the concept to insistence on the plenary revelation of the Pentateuch was from one school of Rabbinic Judaism, probably in response to heretical notions which were being combated. This is not to say that all did not accept the authority of the halakhic system They certainly did; but it does considerably limit the scope of the dogma and allow for more leeway in interpretation.

The contemporary situation is, of course, different in significant ways from that of past centuries. Yet, it is instructive to use past solutions as guidelines in our own times. What should unite the religious wings of Judaism is the determination to remain in the fray and to carry on the dialogue with each other. Perhaps more important is that, while there are many differences, these disagreements are grounded in common loyalty to a series of value concepts such as the existence of God, the acceptance of Torah as a guide to Jewish living, the recognition of the special vocation of the people of Israel as it is expressed through the covenant, and the expectation of messianic fulfillment. There will be different interpretations of these concepts. Different groups will coalesce around the varying interpretations. But there will be an overarching unity rooted in a commonality of commitment to shared concepts.

In order to achieve the goal of unity within diversity, one condition is necessary. Every group espousing a specific kind of interpretation of basic Jewish concepts should vigorously and enthusiastically promote its own understanding of Jewish obligation. However, it must honor and respect those who differ. The model from the past is the relationship, as reported in the Mishnah, between the Hillelites and the Shammaites. The courtesy of the Hillelites, according to the talmudic passages in *Eruvin*, was the reason why, in the end, they prevailed. This, in itself, should be a major lesson to our contemporaries.

Another analogy is the workings of democracy, which presupposes opposition and ruling parties. A democracy can continue to function and to flourish when there are opposition parties. However, democracy cannot continue to function unless both the opposition and the government respect each other and acknowledge each other as legitimate parts of the polity. Religion is not politics, but it can learn from it.

Religionists must recognize that the God whom they acknowledge and imperfectly try to serve is too great and powerful to be contained in words and concepts. He is greater than what can be said about Him. Self-righteousness and exclusivity are contrary to the very religion that is so zealously being defended and furthered. Thus, we have the very difficult task of being confident that we are on the right path, but must incorporate into that certainty an element of doubt; perhaps we might be wrong. Professor Paul Tillich has called for the incorporation of doubt into faith. Faith is, after all, the finite being grasped by the infinite. The finite should always admit an element of doubt into his faith so as to avoid self-



righteousness. We need not only the courage to believe, but, also, the courage to doubt and to believe in spite of doubt. Rabbi Kook was quoted as saying, "*Zrikhim le-havin she-gam mi-perudai ha-deyot yozeit tovah kelalit*" (one must understand that the general good can ensue even from differences of opinion).

Thus, the unity of the Jewish people, at least the part of it which promotes the faith of Judaism, requires the affirmation that it is possible to have varying interpretations of the concepts and the past of Judaism. It was Franz Rosenzweig who pointed out that "Truth is a noun only for God." For us it is an adverb. We are called upon authentically and wholeheartedly to live truthfully in accord with what we have been given to understand.

Furthermore, we should recognize that only one interpretation of Judaic views and beliefs would be both impossible and undesirable. The rich variety of possibilities and expressions is, itself, a source of enrichment and education.

Thus, we have been trying to argue that the unity of the Jewish people is rooted in our history and the teachings embodied in value concepts that we have developed over the millenia. These expressions are an attempt to express in language and action, in study and in prayer, what our people has learned from its engagement with the Divine. The divine force, greater than anything we can say or do, always stands above us as judge and as goal. We never can say enough, nor can we do enough. We must incorporate doubt into our faith. We pray for insight. We do not stand paralyzed until we are sure. We take a leap of action and try, to the best of our lights, to perform the will of our God.

We all know the magnificent rabbinic statement in interpreting the words of Kohelet. "The words of sages are like spurs, and as nails fastened by the masters of the assemblies, which are given from one shepherd" (12:11). The teachers of the Law are those who are gathered together, who sit in groups and busy themselves in the Torah. Some say clean, and others say unclean, some say permit, and others prohibit, some qualify, and others disqualify. Perhaps a man will say, "How can I learn Torah now?" Therefore, the verse says, they were given from one shepherd. One God has given them, one Providential Being has said them. Therefore, make your ears like a funnel and achieve an understanding heart to listen both to the words of those who declare unclean, and to those who say prohibited, those who qualify and those who disqualify.

Unity based on concept, experience and ancient faith, but which includes freedom of interpretation — this, I believe — can be the basis of the religious unity of the Jewish people.

## *Exhibit 94*

EDGAR KOERNER

is a small white suitcase  
with a name written on it  
— Otto Schwarzkopf —  
in careful black lettering. And it has  
those old resort stickers,  
from Badgastein, Kitzbuehl, and someplace else:  
swimmers in a too-blue pool,  
sailors waving from some Alpine lake,  
a tea-dance buffet on a veranda;  
and everyone laughing.

I look at the museum catalogue, it says  
the suitcase was the largest allowed  
for children under ten going to Dachau.  
Just like that. That suitcase.

I try to imagine this Otto's hand  
on the grip, I work up from his hand,  
fill in his body, put him into  
his best Loden coat, a torn address label  
strung to his lapel, see him leave the boxcar,  
stand, big-eyed and pale,  
on the bleak, grey platform,  
mud all around, frost on the mud,  
giant soldiers yelling, huge dogs barking  
through the train's steam. And then  
I lose him, I'm back in the museum,  
staring hard at the suitcase,  
as, so many evenings, up to the end,  
he might have stared: at the pool, the lake,  
the dancers waltzing, at everyone  
laughing, everyone laughing.

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## Timeless Guidelines

*A Guide for Preachers on Composing and Delivering Sermons, The Or-Hadarshanim of Jacob Zahalon, A Seventeenth Century Italian Preacher's Manual.* Translated, Annotated and Introduced by HENRY ADLER SOSLAND. New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1987.

Reviewed by MYRON M. FENSTER

JEWISH PREACHING IN OUR time is often a light matter. Academics tend to scoff. Practitioners see little result. The laity is frequently bored and restive. The intellectual content is seen as scant.

With this book, Henry Adler Sosland has offered a counteroffensive on behalf of the *drashah*. Outwardly, it is a manual for preachers by a physician and *darshan* of 17th century Italy, Jacob Zahalon. In fact, Sosland has gathered together in the text and notes a history of Jewish *darshanut*, its substance and form and, most importantly, its relevance to the life and faith of practicing Jews. It should be read as a testament of Jewish persistence against the background of plague, apostasy and challenge.

A theologian once suggested that the work of religion in our time can be done only with a newspaper in one hand and a Bible in the other, interweaving the relationship of both. Faith is always under assault by pragmatism, secularism and cynicism. For most people, questioning their most cherished ideas and reevaluating them in the light of *kedushah*, of eternity and of permanent value, is neither welcome nor easy. And, yet, it continues to be necessary.

ry. From the Midrash to today, the *drashah* is timeless.

But it must also be timely. Yet, little has been written of it in our time. This admirable guide helps to fill that void, and is a most welcome addition to our literature. The *darshan* will savor it; others would do well to hear its message.

What Sosland has done is to produce a critical edition of *Or Hadarshanim* of Zahalon, a man who knew that preaching is an art but who wanted to make it a science as well. In the process he exposes to us a world where many of the concerns we have today were present.

Some background: In the 16th Century, David Ben Menasseh Darshan, a rabbi of Cracow, recognized that preaching had already reached a crossroads among the masses of Jews and that its practitioners were being unfairly criticized. Thereupon he rendered the still timely advice: "The purpose of *derashot* is to give strong admonition to the masses in order to encourage that which is fine in human character and discourage what is ugly." Darshan goes on to justify exaggeration, overabundance of biblical or Midrashic quotation and roundabout explanation of a verse. He believed that the *drashah* served an extremely essential social and religious purpose in transmitting the Jewish tradition. He argued that those devices which preachers employ are "to make the *drashah* significant to one's listeners whose natural impatience" demands explanations and not only citation of verses. This "natural impatience" needs to be taken into account in the effort to "awaken the drowsy," both physically and spiritually.

This is a prelude to Zahalon's work under review, and a reminder that the problems of Jewish preaching have remained constant. In 1627, a *darshan* of Florence and

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Sienna, Moses Ben Samuel ben Bassa, suggested that the preacher practice "a different kind of wisdom, a special sensitivity and that is to be able to admonish in such a way that people will accept what he tells them, (being) precise and sharp and a person of *derek erez*." Sound advice then and now.

And then there is Zahalon. He knew of none who had preceded him. It was obvious to him that composing a *drashah* also follows an orderly procedure that can be incorporated into a guidebook or manual. This he proceeded to do. As we read it today it is charming and unaffected. But, it is also amazing how very little has changed in three turbulent centuries in terms of "the goodly nature of the proper word in season," the traditional *dar-var be-ito*" (Prov. 15:23).

Zahalon was no itinerant preacher purveying light-weight baggage or a wrinkle-proof commodity. His 1657 *Window Sermons* are well known, and are listed by Leopold Zunz in his history, for, in the midst of a pestilence, Zahalon followed a good Roman practice and spoke from the window of a house while the congregation stood in the street. The synagogues had been closed but Zahalon found a way to bring home the message. The *Or-Hadarshanim* has this sound advice: "We should not be like those who expatiate at great length in sermons which do not relate to the issues of the times and as an after thought append a few words about the matter which is on people's minds." In addition, he reminds the preacher to include himself in all the failings that he lists. Sosland has described this master preacher correctly as "sophisticated, sensitive and a community-minded *darshan*."

In 1665, Zahalon published his *Margaliot Tovot*, including a preacher's prayer that is applicable to anyone who teaches Judaism pub-

licly. By this time, he had already prepared the basic plan for his preacher's manual. (His *Ozar ha-Hayyim*, a manual for physicians, was printed in 1683, but the *Or-Hadarshanim* did not see the light of day in his lifetime.) The period of the *Margaliot Tovot* was rife with Sabbatian heresy but the author's plea is not contingent on time or circumstance: "May I be among those righteous individuals to whom it is said, 'Preach, rabbi, preach, because for you it is appropriate to preach' (San. 100a) for 'you preach well and practise well' (Hag. 14b). I pray that You in Your compassion will lengthen my days and years, and may they not say about me, 'Woe to the rabbinate which buries its own members' (Pes. 87b) — rather, help me to be loved above and respected below!"

In his *Guide* Zahalon lists as his chapter headings thirteen *hazharot* or precautions which the preacher should keep in mind, including quality and length of sermon (not overly simple or obvious), be watchful lest the congregation become tired or restless — Rabbi Akiba already having noted such problems as in *Genesis Rabbah* 58:3), the use of illustration (best at the beginning or end of sermon), on being cheerful and preaching the dynamism ("nor to stand constantly in one fixed position like a tombstone") and, most controversially, concerning the health of the preacher: "He should drink a little fine unadulterated wine which induces a pleasant mood and strengthens the voice and body organs." Concerning the latter, all that I can say from personal experience is that the once or twice, when I succumbed to such a prescription, disaster followed. The Italian wine was probably better.

Most of us will find some of his other advice wise but perhaps difficult or even painful. "After finishing preaching he should go imme-

diately to rest on his bed" and, after that, "he should ask a certain trusted friend to tell him truthfully if he happened to err in any of the matters of his sermon." Take it from a practitioner of long standing that it is no fun to defend a statement once it is finished. Like many others, I have often preached again on the way home, defending my public utterance, but alas, only to suffer defeat. Such is the moment of glory and the burden of office.

In this review I have taken into consideration one of Zahalon's principles, "Do not make your homily too "short," believing that his *Guide* is worthy of discussion and reading. The problem of communicating the Jewish message deserves our attention and review and I personally have found the *Guide* to be a totally absorbing and delightful prescription for the modern preacher. Henry Sosland is to be complimented for his diligence and editorial expertise.



### Secularism As Religion

*Judaism Beyond God.* By SHERWIN WINE. Farmington Hills, Mich. Society for Humanistic Judaism, 1985. 286 pp., \$13.95.

*Reviewed by* BEN HALPERN

WE HAVE HEARD that bad cases make poor law. This suggests that poor law may indicate that we are dealing with a bad case, especially so, if one has to do with a judge who displays clear signs of talent.

The first impression that anyone would take away from Rabbi Wine's secularist Jewish tract is one of the wit and sparkling style of the

author. He may well be the Mort Sahl of the American Jewish clergy. He says, in one place, about the late, great Mordecai M. Kaplan that he had a "humorless edge." About Wine's booklet one might say that, in substance, it is an exercise in wit (vintage, Voltaire or Robert Ingersoll) but has a serious edge. The edge, however, is quite dull; it does not truly penetrate, though it does strike off showers of sparks. These suffice to demonstrate indirectly the hard, recalcitrant core of the American and general Jewish problem, the metal that he is trying, as we all do, to work up into a comprehensible and usable form.

What Rabbi Wine is doing, in brief, is to lead a synagogue which has dismissed God — not by benign neglect, as in some other cases, but explicitly and formally and under a proclamation of anathema. The book before us is the ideological statement that explains and justifies the position and it signalizes the clear hope to turn a local phenomenon — a midwestern *shul* of humanist Jews — into a broad Jewish movement. Rabbi Wine's tract will hardly serve as the manifesto of a new Jewish denomination, though many will sympathize with its thrust for various unrelated reasons. But his analysis and conclusions are a striking indicator of American and general Jewish intellectual problems.

Whether or not effective as such, Rabbi Wine's tract is meant to be an ideological manifesto. After disposing of God (as an illusion with no basis in Reason, a figment of fear-stricken imagination, a fiction put over on the ignorant people by prophets, priests, and other interested parties for their own ends), Rabbi Wine therefore has to deal with Jewish history, and to do so he has to contend with the God-centered documents of Jewish tradition, which are the greater part

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of the evidence for that history. He takes care of the problem like a true son of the eighteenth century by declaring this whole corpus of materials to be mere propaganda which suppressed or distorted the true facts. The real history of the Jews, he says, must be read not from the documents of their tradition but from evidences of the characteristic Jewish personality.

Where does one find such evidence? Wine's passing references to the *Annales* school of French historians and to Berdichevsky imply the contention that, if Jewish historians did their work properly, his case could be proved, but otherwise there is no attempt to do so. He simply refers to a set of current stereotypes about Jews that picture them as typically "critical, skeptical, agnostic." When they survey the human condition, they are driven by "a deep rage . . . an angry refusal to accept what is unacceptable, to praise what is unworthy of praise, to label injustice, justice." Freud, Marx, and Einstein are, as usual, invoked as exemplary cases of the typical Jewish personality.

This pantheon and the values that it illustrates would grace any exhibit of the "religion" of universalistic, secular humanism. The question that naturally arises is, in what sense do they provide the base for a *synagogue*: that is, for a "religion" not only secular and humanistic, but Jewish. Why would a secular humanist who celebrates *universal* values need a *Jewish* religion, and in what sense would the Judaism that he practiced be Jewish?

To such questions Rabbi Wine has simple, rather offhand answers. Judaism, according to him, is any, or all, of a "spectrum of alternatives that find significance and value in Jewish identity." For a secular humanist (particularly, of course, one who happens to have been born Jewish), it is helpful to

learn that "Jewish identity has humanistic value because Jewish experience testifies to the need for reason and dignity." The "Jewish experience" in question is not that which is transmitted in the documents of Jewish tradition. The tradition, in fact, suppresses and distorts the true "underground" history of the Jews, a history that has to be reconstructed in order to supply an appropriate memory for the typical "Jewish personality" canonized in the rites and ceremonies of the secular Judaism of the humanist synagogue. Judaism so conceived "remembers" that to be Jewish is to feel "the indifference of the universe and the terror of self-reliance" and to know that "given the gifts of [Jewish?] destiny, there is no alternative to self-reliance." And if all this is not enough to make a humanist glad to be a Jew, we are told that those who share the true Jewish experience are better qualified than others to become secular humanists, because the Jewish history of suffering is "the strongest testimony to the absence of God."

This is, in some ways, a familiar uninteresting line of argument; nor will historians or theologians be much impressed by Wine's *novel* contributions to the understanding of Judaism as a religion. But for a secularist Jew, committed to his own construction of the history and current condition of a Jewish identity, Rabbi Wine's analysis, confused as it is, has a considerable, if unexpected, interest. It points up, in a particularly sharp light, the paradoxical aspects of the present Jewish situation.

As a Zionist, a secular Jew confronts *galut*, the condition of Jewish exile and homelessness, as the fundamental flaw and oppression of two thousand years of Jewish history, the national disability that Zionism has undertaken to overcome. This places him in opposi-



tion to the other two ways in which Jewish ideologies seek to cope with the *galut* — the traditional loving acceptance of it as God-given penance, only to be redeemed by the Messiah, and the modern denials that exile is any longer an appropriate conception of the Jewish Diaspora since the Emancipation.

This leads to certain corollary positions of the rival ideologies in regard to the *religion* of Jewish tradition. For modernists, too much of traditional Judaism was viewed as a protective encrustation adapted to a time when Emancipation had not yet annulled the *galut* and robbed it of meaning. Hence, Judaism had to be reformed, both of outworn practices and especially of ideas of *galut* that were not only inappropriate but dangerous. For Zionists, the degree to which the rabbinic tradition is seen as an adjustment to life in *galut* (as secular Zionists and, to a lesser degree, some religious Zionists do see it) also requires a change — one related to the condition of national concentration and independence in Israel rather than of Emancipation in the Diaspora. The appropriate change for Israel, from the secularist point of view, would be to supplement the existing secularity of the nation-state base of Jewishness with a more effective separation of the Torah from the state. As for the Diaspora, if one is a Zionist — as distinct from a Diaspora nationalist — it follows that the base of a persisting Jewish identity in that case must logically be the Torah, or some reformed version of it, rather than a secular (whether cultural or sociopolitical) commitment adequately realizable only in Israel.

But these are hard and crude, not hard and fast conclusions, as the consideration of special features of the Jewish condition makes clear. Jewish nationalism has been unable to detach itself from its religious tradition in quite

the same way as its models in Europe, not because of the half-heartedness of secularists but because the relationship is different. Nationalism detached itself from its religious base in many things, but not (except in pathological cases like the Nazis) from the religious style in which basic, universally human moral values are transmitted. For the European nations, as for the new nations within the embrace of other world religions, the divorce from religion left untouched the moral style in which they could communicate within, or across, national lines and be readily accepted and understood. But, for Jews, their religious tradition, which does, indeed, transmit a range of universal human values not significantly different from those of other peoples, does so in a style not readily accepted by others and frequently understood by them in a sense opposed to the meaning that it has for Jews. This, the latent function of tradition for Jewish secularists in Israel, is the foundation upon which numerous other patent causes have produced the problematic entwined structure of state and Torah in Israel. The *galut* has been overcome for Israelis but they remain entangled in a tradition specifically adapted to it.

On a certain Zionist analysis, one can observe the obverse side of this paradox in the Diaspora. If the Diaspora persists after the creation of Israel, two consequences follow: *galut* — already disavowed by Judaism adjusted to Emancipation — is no true exile when one can freely escape to Israel, and only a religiously defined Jewishness, not a secular Jewishness, is truly viable in the Diaspora. This is because a situation of social marginality which is self-imposed may be possible for an individual as a personal eccentricity but can be sustained by a community only by some meta-



physical commitment, one (like the traditional idea of *galut*) whose hopes for the future do not depend on confirmation in history. Such commitment among traditionalists may incorporate the tradition of *galut*, but in a reformed version, adjusted to Emancipation and to the emergence of Israel, the idea of *galut* is an acute embarrassment.

In logic, therefore, everything depends on the sincerity of belief and depth of religious commitment of Diaspora Jews as the social support of their communal survival. But no one can fail to see that there are many who are unmistakably Jews in the Diaspora without such belief or commitment, whether outside of the synagogue or within it. This, indeed, is the reason for Wine's activity and the assumption on which he wrote his manifesto. It is striking, therefore, that, unable to accept the Torah in any version as the base of his secular, humanistic Judaism, he falls back on a version of *galut*.

To be a Jew (or a gypsy), according to Wine, is, by definition, to be a member of a vulnerable family. Such a condition is to be cherished because "Jewish history and Jewish experience — especially in the twentieth century — are vivid witnesses to the absurdity of the universe, to the absence of any moral order in the 'running' of the world." To be even clearer, Wine tells us that anti-Semitism — surely a hallmark of *galut* in the crudest sense — has an important place in Jewish memory because much of what is "humanistically interesting" in the Jewish personality was produced by it.

That anti-Semitism is important in Jewish history is an undoubted fact, but it does seem odd to base a religion on it. Still, if one rejects the supernatural tradition of Torah as the religious base of Diaspora Jewishness, and recognizes that a religious base is indispensa-

ble, then perhaps it makes a sort of sense, however paradoxical, to turn the natural base of Diaspora living, its vulnerability, into a religion. Just as Israel, in overcoming the *galut* physically, remained entangled with the Torah of the *galut*, so the ideologue of secular Diaspora Jewishness, in repudiating the Torah of the *galut*, has to fall back on the fact of the *galut* — and even make a religion of it.

It remains odd that a secular humanist, committed to "an angry refusal to accept what is unacceptable" should make a religion of vulnerability. Perhaps the answer lies in Wine's understanding of what, in religion, is acceptable for a secularist. Only "resignation" to that which human effort cannot change meets this criterion. To make a religion of Jewish vulnerability, expresses, no doubt, such resignation.



### England's Chief Rabbi Speaks

*"If Only My People . . ." Zionism in My Life.* By IMMANUEL JAKOBOVITS. With a Foreword by Sir Isaiah Berlin. Washington, D.C.: B'nai B'rith Books, 1986. 280 pp., \$17.95.

*Reviewed by* SEFTON D. TEMKIN

DURING THE YEARS between the two great wars Winston Churchill produced a multi-volume of history of World War I of which Arthur James Balfour observed that it was "autobiography thinly disguised as universal history." The converse may be attributed to the present volume: avowedly, it is autobio-

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graphical; in fact, it shows the currents of Jewish history beating round the life of the author. The Chief Rabbi assumed office in the heady days of the summer of 1967, immediately after the Israeli victory in the Six Days War, and his book chronicles some of the major concerns confronting him during the troubled years that have followed.

Nominally, the field in which the Chief Rabbi has operated does not differ from that in which his predecessors operated; the players bear the same titles and wear the same uniforms. However, their roles have changed, and the Chief Rabbi's activities bring out the difference. The Jewish community of Great Britain used to be distinguished by a strong lay leadership, and its affairs were coordinated by a group, led by the Rothschilds, with which the Chief Rabbi was associated. Now, the interest of the older families has waned; the concerns of Jewish organisations has widened; and the lay officers rarely show the strength to venture beyond the corner of the patch in which they feel secure. The chief rabbinate is an office which is rooted in history, and the nature of Jewish life allows it almost unlimited flexibility in its operations. The situation was waiting for a determined and courageous occupant to enlarge its horizons. This course Chief Rabbi Jakobovits determined to follow. The decision involved him in much controversy, as this book shows, and, as the course of human events shows even more clearly, there is little predictability in the results to be expected from human decisions. For the time being we are conscious that he is a figure to whom people might look for a lead and that, within the Anglo-Jewish community, he is the one figure of significance in the latter part of the twentieth century.

After twenty years in office, his

status has been acknowledged by an invitation to join the House of Lords. A century ago, the Jews of Great Britain would have been congratulating themselves on the recognition involved in the award of a peerage to Rothschild. In 1988, it is a rabbi who receives the accolade. Some of his pronouncements in relation to Israel have aroused fierce controversy. Will the resentments be more ferocious now that he appears to have had quasi-official status conferred upon him? Will this status erode still further the status of the laity and, with it, such democratic forces as are at work in the community?

Thus, in the short time since this book was published there have been striking changes in the circumstances surrounding its publication. In the first place, there is the enhanced status of its author, now given a voice in Parliament. To that, reference has already been made, though it remains to add that the controversies generated by his views on the State of Israel may have marked him as a man with something to say and helped to attract attention to his abilities and point of view generally.

Secondly, the basis of the relationship of the Diaspora to the State of Israel has shifted, and however its contours take shape, the *status quo ante* will not return, the status quo here being the position before the disturbances in the Occupied / Conquered / Administered Territories / Judea-Samaria, however they may be described. In 1976, a group called Breira, which was dissatisfied with the automatic adherence to the Israeli position followed by the major American Jewish organisations, was easily snuffed out of existence; in 1982, the war in Lebanon provoked sufficient dissent to make any such operation impossible; by 1988, dissent among American Jews as to Israel's dealings with the Arabs un-

der its control has become one of the most talked of features of the situation.

Behind much of the material gathered in this book lies the argument as to whether a major Jewish figure should "go public" with his dissent from the policies of the Israeli government. Both Lebanon and the handling of the Arabs have caused the waves of dissent to overflow this dyke.

If this can be cited as proving the correctness of the Chief Rabbi's attitude, it also surrounds his arguments with an atmosphere of staleness. Details of his exchanges with other leading figures become tedious; too often we just cannot see the wood for the trees. However, if cold potatoes do not stimulate the appetite, petrified potatoes can excite intellectual curiosity. We are within a short distance of the centenary of the pamphlet in which Herzl argued that the establishment of a *Judenstaat*, usually translated "Jewish State," would produce a solution to the Jewish problem. The paranoia and misrepresentation surrounding the State of Israel may help scholars to understand how the State of Israel, after being successfully established, has quickly become the Jewish problem of the twentieth century.

The Chief Rabbi does not offer a programme. Implicit in his description of his experiences is a plea for pluralism in regard to attitudes to Israel. One would welcome an expression of his views on pluralism in regard to religious affairs.

## Learning From The Holocaust

*Crisis and Covenant: The Holocaust in American Jewish Fiction.* By ALAN L. BERGER. Albany, N.Y. SUNY Press, 1985.

*Reviewed by* RACHEL FELDHAY BRENNER

THE HOLOCAUST has often been defined in terms of its incomprehensibility. The magnitude of the tragedy has defied rational explanations; its brutality has revealed inexorable aspects of human psyche. Yet the terrible outburst of unfathomable evil has evoked literary responses which strive to reaffirm the moral purpose of human existence.

While both Jewish and non-Jewish writing has been imbued with Holocaust consciousness, the Jewish writer's response entails the specific issue of Jewish survival. It subsumes the notion of Jewish vulnerability in a reality which no longer presents the threat of annihilation as a merely theoretical proposition. This literary response to the European tragedy represents, therefore, a landmark which commemorates the dead and, at the same time, signals the future of those who have survived.

Alan Berger's *Crisis and Covenant* offers an illuminating methodology to decode the complex messages that this literary landmark transmits to its readers. Focusing on the Holocaust theme in American Jewish fiction, Berger not only identifies the sense of disorientation that marks the response to the tragedy, but also outlines a framework which contains and explicates the polarized aspects of that response. It is, he claims, the reflection of "contemporary Judaism in search

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of itself." The "search," which entails a reexamination of the mainstays of Jewish identity, may lead towards reconfirmation of ethnic and religious tenets; it may also exacerbate the sense of disillusion and skepticism in regards to the singularity of Jewish existence.

The author has thus undertaken a particularly difficult critical task of measuring and evaluating an *evolving* situation, a historical *process* whose conclusive stage is as yet unforeseeable. Since the literary treatment of the Holocaust demonstrates the conflicted positions of particularism versus universalism, the reaffirmation or rejection of religious identity determines the post-Holocaust writer's world view. In this respect, the title of the study indicates the criteria of Berger's critical examination: the *crisis* of ambivalent identity is measured against the immutable religious norm of the *covenant*. Reaffirmation of the covenant as a binding agreement between God and His people reasserts Jewish viability in history despite the shattering experience of the Holocaust; rejection of the covenant by the Holocaust survivor nullifies the *raison d'être* of Jewish historical continuity. The centrality of the Holocaust in contemporary Jewish history ineluctably evokes the centrality of the covenant as the emblem of "chosenness." At the same time, the consciousness of the catastrophe questions the meaningfulness of the covenant in today's reality.

The author explores the notion of the covenant in a wide selection of American Jewish writers. In some of them, such as Arthur Cohen, Cynthia Ozick, Hugh Nissenson, Elie Wiesel and Isaac B. Singer, he identifies the prevailing need, despite doubts and hesitations, to reaffirm the covenant; others, such as Richard Elman, Edward Lewis Wallant, and Bernard Malamud tend to communicate the

desire to obliterate covenantal ties. Yet, Berger judiciously does not impose artificially symmetrical categorizations on the works that he examines; the *crisis* in his critical explication often emerges from a paradoxical co-existence of universalist secularism and religious particularism. Thus, Ozick's work demonstrates the confluence of both "redemptive" Jewish and general humanistic themes, while Bellow's Mr. Sammler, a product of secularism, indicts the universalist outlook, yet finds it impossible to free himself from its formative tenets.

Despite the inconclusivity of ideological and emotional incongruities as represented in American post-war writing, Berger's analysis seems to decode signs of a hopeful denouement of the post-Holocaustal identity crisis. The very act of reassessment that Holocaust consciousness entails evokes awareness and the need for self-definition, indispensable factors in the process of emotional healing.

Berger's methodology presents a multidisciplinary approach to literature. The underlying assumption of his scholarly quest is that a literary text as a work of art should be examined in the context of the historical and sociological reality out of which it stems. His theological orientation meets the literary aspects of the works that he examines in the context of cultural referentiality. The theological exploration of the meaningfulness of the covenant in the post-Holocaust world treats the contemporary Holocaust event in the historical context of biblical, rabbinic, mystical, and modern perceptions of the covenant. The literary analysis displays the Holocaust theme in the generic framework of the biblical story, the midrash, the Hasidic story, and the traditions of *kinot* and *selihot*. The convergence of these two approaches produces a new, en-

riching appraisal of Holocaust literature.

Berger's methodology enables him to transcend the hitherto accepted classifications of survivors, witnesses, bystanders in relation to the Holocaust. Some studies, such as Ezrahi's *By Words Alone*, have been structured according to geographic-historical distinctions, while others, such as Langer's *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination*, deal almost exclusively with writers who experienced the Holocaust directly. By subscribing to Arthur Cohen's dictum that "all Jews are survivors," Berger succeeds in focusing on the aspect of covenantal-historical dialectic that any survivor, as a member of the Jewish community, must encounter and must come to terms with in the aftermath of the Holocaust. Thus, he is able to analyze covenantal problematics in the works of Elie Wiesel, a concentration camp survivor, Isaac B. Singer, a European-born American, and Philip Roth, a second-generation native American.

Berger's approach and findings present the reader with an edifying and stimulating approach. The greatest merit of his study, how-

ever, seems to lie in its educational aspect. By placing the response to the Holocaust in its theological and historical context, the author adheres to the crucial Mizvah, "And you shall teach it to your children . . ." His succinct review of theological preoccupation with the Holocaust in the works of Fackenheim, Cohen, Rubenstein, and Greenberg emphasizes the communal aspect of the crisis that the Jewish individual experiences today. His extensive research teaches us that we are not alone in our predicament and our uncertainty about the future. The sense of communality that is delivered so cogently reduces, somewhat, the forbidding sense of the enormity of human evil. The very notion of emotional and ideological struggle with the covenant assuages, to some extent, the sense of survivalist anxiety by placing it in the spectrum of Jewish continual existence as God's people. Berger's study seems to emerge from an unshaken conviction that, as long as we are willing to invoke our past in order to understand the present, the need and desire to assert our covenantal identity will prevail.

## *Some Books Worth Noting*

### **Anti-Semitism**

Litvinoff, Barnet. *The Burning Bush*. Anti-Semitism and World History. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1988. 493 pp., \$22.50.

Hirsch, Herbert and Jack D. Spiro eds. *Persistent Prejudice*. Perspectives on Anti-Semitism. Fairfax, Va.: George Mason University Press, 1988. viii + 158 pp., \$24.50.

Most of Jewish history, since the beginning of the Common Era, has taken place outside of the Land of Israel, in an anti-Semitic world. In his book, Barnet Litvinoff traces both the history and the consequences of anti-Semitism, stressing particularly the events of the last four hundred years. He comes to the optimistic conclusion that anti-Semitism is today merely "one of the world's minor afflictions."

In another approach, the authors of the essays in the second volume analyze anti-Semitism through its religious and ideological roots and its cultural interpretations. Though the Introduction begins with the sentence: "Anti-Semitism has been one of the most persistent and deadly forms of prejudice of all time," the book does end with some hopeful conclusions, particularly in assessing the shifting relationship between blacks and Jews.

Would that the outlook for the future that is presented in these two books were to come true.

### **Emigration**

Sanders, Ronald. *Shores of Refuge*. A Hundred Years of Jewish Emigration. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1988. xiii + 673 pp., \$27.95.

The last century of Jewish migration from Europe — primarily to the United States, but to Palestine, the Continent and the Orient as well — is admirably chronicled here. Though replete with careful documentation, this is not a dry-as-dust history. Sanders, whose credentials as a historian are first-rate, has written a fascinating chronicle (after all, Jews are a fascinating subject) depicting the vicissitudes and adventures of the "wandering Jews." Details as well as broad overviews abound, so that one can see the forest as well as the trees.

### **Hasidism**

Rabinowicz, Harry M. *Hasidism. The Movement and Its Masters*. Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1988. xiii + 453 pp., \$30.00.

Steinsaltz, Adin. *The Long Shorter Way*. Discourses on Chasidic Thought. Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1988. xvi + 353 pp., \$30.00.

In the first book we have a history of Hasidism and its masters, seem-

ingly for the uninitiated. In the manner of the hasidic parable, the material is divided into small, well-oriented sections, but it is followed by copious footnotes, bibliography and an index for those who wish more detailed and scholarly information. In the meantime, the reader is carried pleasantly along through history by the author's engaging style and vast fund of interesting detail.

Serious students of hasidism will welcome the Steinsaltz volume, which is divided into fifty-three chapters, each relating to a chapter of the great hasidic classic, the *Tanya*. The author's analyses of the complex nature of man are full of the great insights and the careful thinking of this great scholar of our time. They are now available for the first time in an English translation by Yehuda Hanegbi.

### **Yiddish Poetry**

Wisse, Ruth R. *A Little Love in Big Manhattan*. Two Yiddish Poets. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988. x + 279 pp., \$25.00.

In an unusual approach to her subject matter, Ruth R. Wisse presents biographies and critical analyses of two Yiddish poets, Mani Leib and Moshe Leib Halperin, one of whose poems is the source of the book's title. They were prominent figures in that group of talented writers who came to the United States early in the twentieth century and were called *di Yunge*, (the young ones). Interestingly, at the same time, a group of creative Hebrew poets also appeared in this country, as though to underscore the point that verse was the favorite medium of the time. In their day, Yiddish as a language was already declining, but the renewed interest in it in our day should also lead readers to the appreciative perusal of these young poets. Certainly this book will help in that direction.

R.B.W.



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